

Hafa Adai!

Ex-manager of yachts files wrongful termination suit. PAGE 3
Ex-CUC line crew gets 6 years in prison for burglary. PAGE 5

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75¢

CARE: Still 46 families in its care

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The non-profit organization that took up recovery efforts in the CNMI in the aftermath of Typhoon Souledor in 2015 still has 46 families under its care that require assistance.

If funding is not secured by early February, it is highly possible that assistance to these families would run out, according to the group, the Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts, during its third annual impact meeting yesterday at the Office of the Governor.

As of January 2018, there are currently 46 families still awaiting assistance from CARE and it would take over \$400,000 to serve them all,

See CARE on Page 4

NMBAC: This is good legislation

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Business Alliance Corp. is pleased with the proposal that would extend the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program for another 10 years.

According to NMBAC chair Alex Sablan, the NMBAC is happy with the several issues that the NMI U.S. Workforce Act (now H.R. 4869) would resolve.

"It's not everything that everybody wanted but it is absolutely a cross-section of issues that needed to be

See NMBAC on Page 4



The Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts group discusses the current progress of their recovery efforts during their third annual impact meeting yesterday at the Governor's Office conference room.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Maratita: Muña opaque with CHCC finances

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Vice Speaker Janet Maratita, who is offering a bill that would abolish the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and revert

» Muña cites 'voluminous' reports being asked CHCC

it back to the Department of Public Health, accused the corporation's management yesterday of not being transparent with its finances.

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Maratita (R-Saipan) said that CHCC, currently under the management of chief executive officer Esther Muña, is opaque when asked to provide financial records.

"Regardless of the amount of letters sent to CHCC, it is unfortunate that we are not able to get what we need to assist them,"

See MARATITA on Page 4

'CUC still lags in installing water meters'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Up to this time, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. continues what a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency inspector described as CUC's "longstanding inability" to install new meters, Tinger said.

» DOJ: CUC has made progress but much needs to be accomplished

Citing CUC records, EPA inspector John Tinger said that up to 4,000 out of approximately 9,000 customer accounts had malfunctioning meters in 2015 alone.

Yet CUC reported in 2016 that it funded approximately 2,000

"CUC has not provided a com-

See CUC on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Johnson & Johnson posted a rare quarterly loss of \$10.71 billion.

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NATION

A 15-year-old student killed two classmates and hit a dozen others with gunfire.

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LIFE & STYLE

The Academy Awards shower outsiders with milestone-setting nominations.

PAGE 20



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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

McDonald's donates \$3K to Karidat

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

McDonald's Saipan donated \$3,000 to Karidat Social Services last Tuesday.

According to McDonald's Middle Road general manager Joe Ayuyu Jr., his family has always been supportive of

Karidat and its services.

Last Tuesday, Ayuyu met with Karidat representatives for the first time to discuss the organization's goals and to give him a better understanding of what they offer the community.

He said it's only fair for businesses to give back to

organizations like Karidat. "I would like to challenge all businesses to also find ways to help Karidat. It's the economy and the community that gives us our success so we want to return the success."

Karidat is also special to him as a loved one has been availing of Karidat's services.



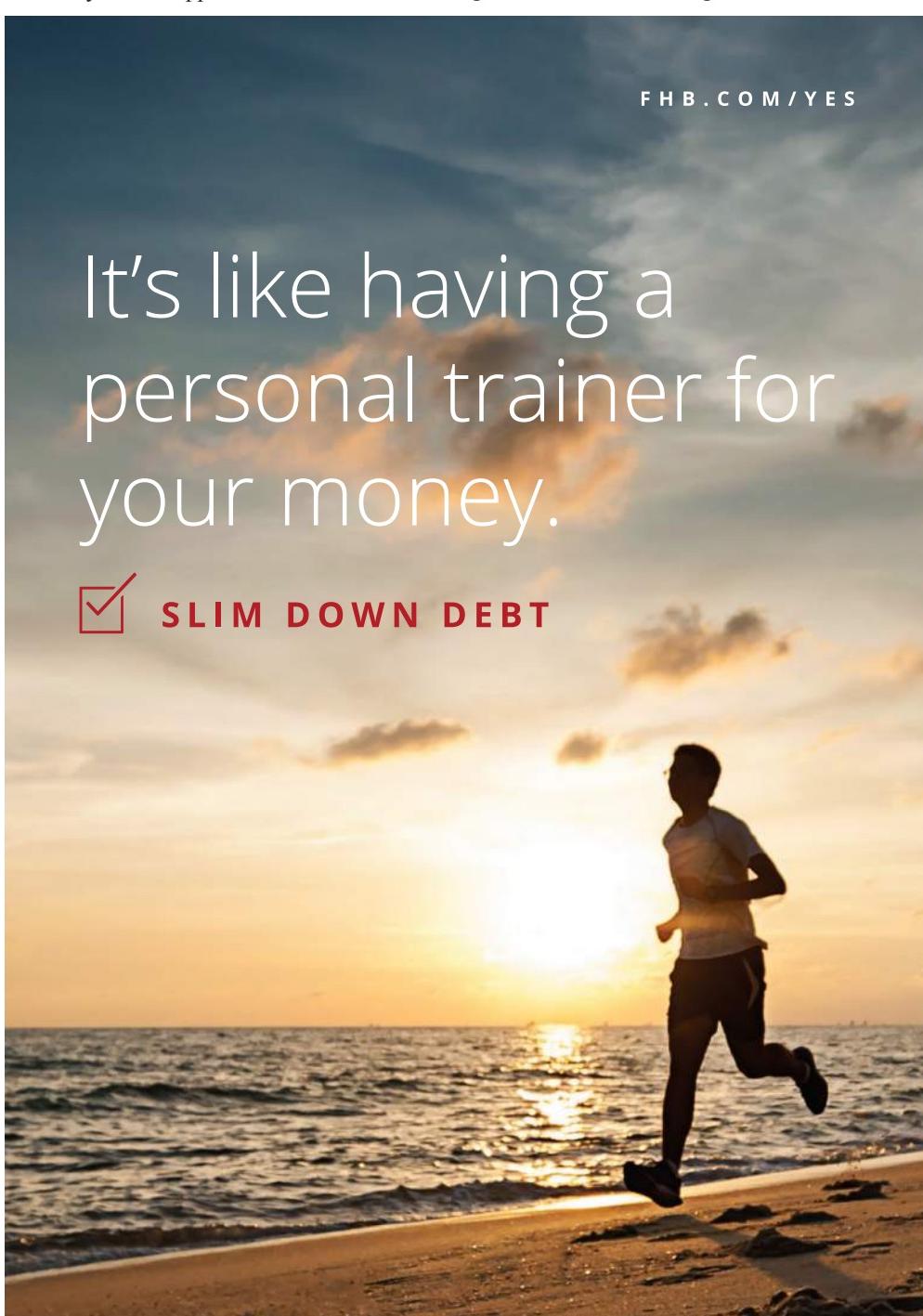
Karidat Social Services is presented a check for \$3,000 by McDonald's Saipan officials last Tuesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

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"I can't give any names... but I can say that there is somebody who is pretty close to us that avails of the services of Karidat and we're very happy there is an organization like that to help people in need," he said.

He promises to continue to

support Karidat for the kind of work they do.

"We want to support organizations such as Karidat that focus on helping [the] less fortunate," he said.

Karidat administrator Judith Pangelinan, who represented Karidat during the

donation event last Tuesday, said they are very appreciative of the support.

"We always welcome any donation. Anything that we get and we receive, it's always being given back to the community. Nothing is left behind," she said.



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Ex-manager of yachts files wrongful termination suit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former manager of luxury yachts for patrons of the Best Sunshine Casino has filed a wrongful termination lawsuit before the Superior Court against the company for allegedly terminating his contract last year after he allegedly complained of illegal acts.

Lawrence Williams, through counsel William M. Fitzgerald, is suing Phoenix Services Inc. for wrongful termination in violation of public policy and breach of contract.

Williams asked the court to hold Phoenix liable to pay him unspecified damages. He demanded a jury trial.

The suit is not against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, which operates the Best Sunshine Casino. In a statement yesterday, IPI said its attorneys have advised that since the company is not a party to the lawsuit, it would be improper and inappropriate to comment upon specific allegations in the litigation.

IPI said it expects both its employees and other businesses associated with IPI, including affiliates, consultants, professionals, vendors, and their employees to conduct themselves lawfully and comply with local and federal laws.

Saipan Tribune was still trying to get comments from Phoenix Services as of press time.

According to Fitzgerald in the complaint, Phoenix, whose sole shareholder is Pui Seng Cheong, recruited Williams in 2016 to manage luxury yachts that were being operated on behalf of IPI.

Phoenix described its business activities in its 2016 corporation report as business services and operates luxury vessels that are provided to patrons of the Best Sunshine Casino as living accommodations and for recreational purposes.

Fitzgerald said that, while working for Phoenix, Williams observed that the company was violating numerous maritime and federal laws and regulations.

The alleged violations include B-1 visa regulations, manning regulations, standards requiring vessel over 200 tons to go to sea during typhoons, ignoring safety inspection requirements, and regulations covering commercial charters within U.S. waters.

Fitzgerald said that Wil-

liams brought these matters to the attention of the Phoenix management and demanded that they be stopped and corrected.

Phoenix terminated Williams' employment last July 26. Fitzgerald said that

when Williams asked why he was being terminated, he was told he seemed to be unhappy working for the

company.

After that, Phoenix hired a non-U.S. citizen to replace Williams, Fitzgerald said.

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MARATITA**From Page 1**

she said.

"We cannot assist them if they do not give us the information to justify appropriations that we appropriate to them," she said, adding that the House has been trying to provide CHCC with funding but "the lack of concrete information" hinders that effort.

Maratita's House Bill 20-149 seeks to repeal Public Law 16-51 that created CHCC and revive it as a line department under the Office of the Governor, known as the Department of Public Health.

"I have a passion to assist the corporation; however, I could not get all the necessary information to assist the corporation," added Maratita.

Citing numbers reportedly extracted from the medical referral program, Maratita said a large portion of patients who are referred to off-island hospitals are due to either the lack of specialized doctors at the Commonwealth Health Center or the lack of necessary medical equipment.

Maratita said her office

has been asking Muña for an updated list of hospital equipment and tools but got nothing.

When asked for comments, Muña provided *Saipan Tribune* with copies of the letters that Maratita sent CHCC.

According to a letter dated last Dec. 22, 2017, Maratita asked for a total of 26 documents from CHCC.

The documents, described by Muña in a message to *Saipan Tribune* as "voluminous," included documents such as personnel listings and annual salaries from fiscal year 2012 to fiscal year 2018 and a separate report for policies and procedures on personnel, procurement, healthcare quality services and safety, accounting system, information technology system, revenue cycle system, off-island medical referrals, subsidy programs for low income, CMS service, financing, travels, and all other operational policies—including those for the several clinics under CHCC, the Kagman Health Center, etc.

Following these two requested items, Maratita also asked for 24 more reports to be compiled and submitted

without a given deadline. All in all, Maratita asked CHCC for a total of 26 reports.

"In the meantime, we have to prepare for the audit, a cost report filing and budget preparation for the board to review, all due in January. We are a busy department," said Muña, adding that none of Maratita's letters specified any deadlines.

Muña also provided *Saipan Tribune* with their response to Maratita's request.

Muña said in a letter dated last Jan. 12, 2018, that CHCC is bombarded by not only board of directors' requirements, but also annual audit requirements and other external requirements expected of CHCC.

"CHCC has...begun its 2017 single audit concurrently with the 2016 audit for CHCC to be back on track for timely single audits," Muña told Maratita. "CHCC is simultaneously addressing its 2015 single audit with the Office of the Inspector General, which requires extensive reporting and evidence substantiation."

Muña continued: "In addition, CHCC is also working on and finalizing its fiscal year 2019 corporate-wide

budget for all of its over 100 business units for presentation and submission to CHCC's board...as well as the CNMI Legislature."

Muña added in her letter that the 2019 corporate budget includes major reevaluation and analysis of CHCC corporate revenue projections, given the eventual loss of Medicaid Children's Health Insurance Program funding, which amounts to "millions of dollars of lost revenues" for the corporation.

In addition to the heap of requirements, she added that she was also working on the CHCC fiscal year 2017 Medicare cost report, a report requiring extensive data analysis, reconciliation, and reporting as well as the fiscal year 2016 Medicare cost report.

"These are all major tasks required of CHCC and normally run concurrently, which requires major effort from CHCC staff. As such, we respectfully request for additional time to address your data requests," said Muña.

Maratita reportedly did not respond to the letter.

In a message to *Saipan Tribune*, Muña said that

CHCC has responded to requests from the Legislature several times.

"I have never seen anything like this before. A legislator who constantly attacks instead of helping CHCC," Muña said. "I talked to [Maratita about the requirements] at church. She said it was okay and that she understood that I recently lost my brother."

Writing off over \$203M in debt

Maratita's Dec. 22, 2018, letter not only mentioned the mammoth number of reports she requested, but also questioned CHCC writing off over \$203 million in debt that was owed the former DPH, as cited in CHCC's 2014 single audit.

"This amount, in my humble opinion, needs to be justified," Maratita wrote Muña in the same letter.

Muña responded in her Jan. 12, 2018, letter that the bad debt, or uncollectible debt, dated back to the inception of the former DPH.

"Upon the creation of the

CHCC, the bad debts of the former DPH were significantly aged. Thus, as recommended by the public auditor, these former DPH bad debts were written off as uncollectible, especially given that DPH, formerly a unit under the auspices of the Executive Branch, was dissolved and a new healthcare corporation was created by public law," Muña wrote.

In an interview yesterday, Maratita told *Saipan Tribune* that CHCC was unable to provide documentation to back up the claim that the public auditor recommended that CHCC write off the balance.

Citing the public auditor, Maratita said, "They couldn't find anything in their reports that states they recommended that."

"Even if CHCC did write it off, she should have reported to the Legislature, reported to the people," added Maratita.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

CARE**From Page 1**

according to CARE board of directors chair Alex Sablan.

"There are still 46 families who need their homes either repaired or rebuilt and we're about \$480,000 away from that completion," he said.

The funding has to be secured by Jan. 30 to keep the CARE volunteers working and to keep resources flowing in. If a source of funding is not secured, CARE volunteers would have to cease with the recovery

efforts and possibly turn down requests by families.

"We need the money by the end of January in order to justify [helping these 46 families]. ...When we try to leverage resources from [the Federal Emergency Management Agency], through the Mennonites Disaster Services, we have to have a plan in place. That plan requires there to have resources on the ground to actually keep them working. We will not have the resources after Jan. 30 so we need to have that money in before then," said Sablan.

Alex Sablan said the goal now is to just keep the economy's improvement going at a steady clip.

"Our economy is improving. We want to keep the momentum going. We believe that if the momentum is continued, salaries would rise [and] we would be able to attract more and more individuals [to come] back home because things are improving," he said.

The proposed 10-year extension of the visa program would only stabilize the economy further, according to Alex Sablan.

"Every time we get to a certain point, we get a glitch like the deadline. ...This 10 years will give us the momentum, the stability, to keep investors' confidence in place, to keep people invested in the idea of returning home and so we're thankful," he said.

NMBAC is also grateful for

In talking about the progress that CARE has made in getting the island back to full recovery since Typhoon Soudelor, Sablan said the local government is currently working to provide CARE with the resources it needs as early as February so that recovery efforts would not be put on hold.

"We've been working with the governor and the Legislature. It looks like in the next few weeks...in early February...we should be able to get the complete dollars," he said. According to Sablan, once the group receives the

the provision that resolves the ghost permit issues.

"We love that provision because it has the ability for [employers] to reutilize a CW visa and not lose it for the fiscal year," Alex Sablan said.

According to him, the NMBAC brought the provision to the table because visas were being applied for, approved, and not used.

"What was occurring was people were applying for the visa but not necessarily bringing the individual in, so that CW was burned for the year. There was no individual but the CW was provided for that particular company," he said.

The proposed legislation allows for the visa to be revoked and reused if it is not used within 60 days.

"If a visa is not utilized within 60 days of its application and acceptance through the processing center, then it

\$480,000 they need, CARE would be able to complete recovery efforts.

CARE executive director Maxine Laszlo said that they, along with their partners, are finding ways to get the resources they need in order to complete CARE's mission.

"Right now, we are really well-positioned. Many of our representatives, our local government supporters, the Governor's Office, everyone still truly cares about these families. It's just a matter of when we will be able to find the resources," she said.

will be burned and returned back into the pool, or that the employer who has somebody that has to leave early within their contract period, be also be able to put that permit back into the pile and be able to renew for someone else to replace that so that a valuable human resource to our economy is not wasted," he said.

Alex Sablan said the NMBAC would support Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Delegate Sablan when the legislation is discussed at the committee level in Congress.

"We're going to support the governor and our delegate. They will be on the panel and will be testifying on behalf of the Commonwealth... We are looking at somewhere around 23 individuals from the business community traveling along with the Tinian delegation, some individuals from the Rota delegation, and the Saipan delegation," he said.

prehensive accounting of the water metering programs nor a specific update on the installations of the 2,000 new meters," he said.

Tinger has been designated by EPA as project coordinator of Stipulated Order No. 1, which focuses on drinking water and wastewater issues and the restructuring of CUC's organization.

His latest declaration was attached to the U.S. government's January 2018 status report that was submitted by the U.S. Department of Justice to the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Tinger, who has inspected CUC's Agingan and Sadog Tasi sewage treatment plants, collection system pump stations, and water tanks, pointed out that CUC managed to fill all key management positions in mid-2017, but the chief engineer position has been vacant since July 2017.

He noted that vacancies in key management positions have impacted progress on many Stipulated Order 1 items over the past several years.

"With relatively new management in place, it is critical to re-establish timelines and specific plans to address the remaining Stipulated Order 1 requirements, and for CUC's new management to commit to the recommendations identified in the master plan," he said.

Tinger said that CUC did not hire a chief engineer within the required time and has yet to fill the position.

He disclosed that EPA

slapped CUC last Friday with a penalty of \$15,000 for the first 15 days of violation pursuant to Stipulated Order 1.

Financially, Tinger said, CUC continues to report that it operates at an annual loss and that it is not billing customers adequately to cover the costs of service.

CUC has reported compliance with all primary drinking water quality standards in 2016 and 2017.

Tinger said that, in June 2017, CUC issued a public advisory to announce that it had detected levels of perfluorooctane sulfonate that exceeded the EPA health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion in a limited area of its drinking water system.

He said PFOs may be associated with firefighting foams at airfields and were phased out around 2002.

Because of the test results, the inspector said, CUC closed down approximately 10 wells in the vicinity of the airport with elevated contaminant levels.

Although progress has been made to cure CUC's long-standing operational deficiencies and failure to comply with stipulated orders, there is still much to be accomplished, according to Bradley R. O'Brien, a lawyer for the DOJ's Environmental Enforcement Section.

In the U.S. January 2018 status report, O'Brien said the U.S. will continue to work with CUC and other parties to accomplish the full purpose of the stipulated orders—that CUC becomes an environmentally safe, responsible, and financially independent entity.

LEGISLATIVE TALKS

Sen. Justo Quitugua, left, chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, met with Public School System officials yesterday afternoon. In this photo, Quitugua discusses with Education Commissioner Glenn Muña, right, and PSS federal programs officer Tim Thornburgh, center, among other education officials present, funding and other appropriations pending at the Legislature to support PSS and updates on the school district's programs and initiatives.

Ex-CUC line crew gets six years in prison for burglary

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former line crew of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. who pleaded guilty to burglary and engaging police officers in a car chase using a stolen vehicle was slapped yesterday with a six-year prison term.

Daro Reyes Cabrera, 39, was sentenced to a total of seven years in prison, with one year suspended.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho said the suspended one-year sentence would allow Cabrera to pay restitution to his victim, Bruce Berline, CUC, and the Department of Public Safety.

Cabrera was ordered to pay Berline \$170; CUC \$440 for its Ford F250 utility vehicle for damage and property loss; and DPS \$5,004 for its Toyota Tacoma damage and property loss.

Cabrera was given credit for time served since his arrest on July 14, 2016. He will be eligible to apply for parole after serving the first two years of his six-year sentence.

He will then be placed on probation for three years.

The Office of the Attorney General originally charged Cabrera with charges that would have resulted in a possible maximum sentence of 16 years and six months.

Later, a plea deal with Cabrera offered a possible sentence of just seven years imprisonment.

The judge noted that Cabrera has a prior conviction for burglary, in which he received a five-year suspended sentence.

Ex-OPA staff who is accused of theft fails to show up at hearing

A former employee of the Office of the Public Auditor failed to show up at a status conference yesterday in Superior Court in connection with a theft case filed against her.

As a result, Associate Judge Joseph Camacho issued a bench warrant against Violeta Agulto Diaz if she fails to appear at her next status conference on Jan. 31.

Diaz's counsel, assistant public defender Nancy Dominski, appeared in court. Assistant attorney general Heather Barcenas represented the government.

"This prior lenient sentence failed to rehabilitate the defendant, and failed to be a significant deterrence," he said.

Camacho said Cabrera requires a much longer sentence to insure that he fully understands his actions and is deterred from committing any future crimes.

He pointed out that during the pursuit, Cabrera used an F-250 CUC utility truck to ram a DPS police barricade, resulting in police officer Rudolfo Hermosilla's left wrist being injured.

The judge said the officers opted to quickly remove Cabrera from the CUC vehicle.

"Defendant is alive today because DPS officers did not use their firearms and respond with deadly force," he said.

Berline stated that Cabrera's action of breaking into his home "have taken away a degree of peacefulness, tranquility, and safety that my family used to have living on Saipan."

Berline said Cabrera returned some of the items he stole, only after he knew he had been caught red-handed by a security camera.

Cabrera pleaded guilty to burglary, theft of vehicle, and criminal mischief as part of a plea deal. The offenses carry a maximum sentence of seven years in prison.

Assistant attorney general Heather Barcenas, counsel for the government, recommended a maximum sentence of seven years imprisonment.

Assistant public defender Nancy Dominski, counsel for Cabrera, recommended a three-year prison term.



MANAGER'S TOP PICKS



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DOCOMO DONATION

Docomo Pacific recently donated a mobile device charging station to Northern Marianas College so students can recharge their phones, iPads, and other electronic devices. The donation was led by Brent Deleon Guerrero, brand coordinator, second from left; Joe Torres, Docomo Pacific Enterprise sales manager, fourth from right, and Timothy Asaviao, prepaid coordinator of Docomo Pacific, third from right. NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, fourth from left, accepted the donation on behalf of NMC. The charging station is free for students to use.

NMC

**DYS, PSS, Corrections strengthen interagency partnership****COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION**

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission"), hereby give notice that the Commission has scheduled its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 30, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library (Technology Room) in Susupe, Saipan.

The following Agenda will be discussed:

- I. PRELIMINARIES:
 - A. Call to Order
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Adoption of Agenda
 - D. Adoption of Minutes: December 21, 2017
- II. REPORTS:
 - A. Report by the Chairman
 - B. Report by the Executive Director

PUBLIC COMMENTS**MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS:**

- A. Casino Licensee (IPI) Updates:
 - 1. Construction Progress – Imperial Pacific Resort & Hotel (Imperial Palace)
 - 2. IPI Personnel – Resident Employment Objectives & CLA Annual Plan
 - 3. Responsible Gaming Program
 - 4. Compliance Committee
 - 5. Other Miscellaneous Matters

Other Matters:**OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. Proposed Permanent Adoption of Casino Regulations:
 - 1. § 175-10.1-595(a)(b) Additional Documents for Ongoing Financial Suitability
 - 2. § 175-10.1-920(b)(4) Casino Employee Licensee Standards.
 - 3. § 175-10.1-1105 Duty to Disclose and Cooperate.
 - 4. § 175-10.1-1130 Consent to Examination of Accounts and Records.
 - 5. § 175-10.1-1315 Disqualification Criteria.
 - 6. § 175-10.1-1501 Commencement of Complaint.
 - 7. § 175-10.1-1510 Notice of Defense.
 - 8. § 175-10.1-1515 Right to Hearing; Waiver.
 - 9. § 175-10.1-1525 Revocation of License or Registration; Hearing.
 - 10. § 175-10.1-1805(b)(14-16) Grounds for Disciplinary Action.
 - 11. § 175-10.1-1830(c) Reports of Violations and of Felony Conviction.
 - 12. § 175-10.1-1855 Collection of Gaming Credit.
 - 13. § 175-10.1-2535(c) Determination of Offense Level.
 - 14. § 175-10.1-2555 No Hearing Necessary for Determinations.
 - 15. § 175-10.1-2605(f)(g) Licensure and Registration Required.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Consideration of IPI's Request to extend the current VIP Cash and Complimentary Rebate Program (Rolling Chip Program) up to December 31, 2019.
- B. Consideration of IPI's Request to Install Credit/Debit Card Terminals in VIP Cages.
- C. Consideration of IPI's Request to Implement "Rolling on Table".

- D. Consideration and Adoption for Publication for Public Comment Proposed Regulations - § 175-10.1-2965 Third Party Exclusion Procedures.

- E. Consideration and Adoption for Publication for Public Comments Proposed Amendment to:

- 1. § 175-10.1 - 2540 of the Regulations – Mandatory Offense Levels.
 - 2. § 175-10.1 - 2545 of the Regulations – Penalties.

- F. Approval of Regular Casino Vendor 2-Year License (Non-Gaming):
 - 1. Cabot Coach Builder, Inc. – Provides Limousines and Shuttle Busses (Provisional License Exp. 04/30/18)
 - 2. Morrico Equipment LLC. – Supplies Heavy Equipment (Provisional License Exp. 04/30/18)

- G. Notification of Provisional Vendor Licenses:
 - 1. Hang Hing Weaving Factory Ltd. -Supplier of Hotel Linen (Exp. 12/26/18)
 - 2. Pacific Rim Land Development, LLC. -General Construction (Exp. 12/27/18)

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- A. Report by the Legal Counsel
- B. Report by the CCC Audit Division
- C. IPI Financial Matters

ADJOURNMENT

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session. In addition, the Commission may extend its official meeting for another day or more if necessary.

/s/ Juan M. Sablan
Chairman

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Division of Youth Services, the CNMI Public School System, and the Department of Corrections recently completed an interagency protocol meeting to address PSS' final form of the standard operational procedures.

DYS administrator Vivian Sablan said the SOP is intended to provide guidance for the delivery of general education programs and special education programs to the juvenile offenders incarcerated at the Department of Corrections.

"In the first week of January, a full-time PSS teacher was assigned to the facility to deliver the mandated educational services. The Juvenile Offender Educational Program SOP was led by the PSS Office of Student and Support Services and the principal of the Da'ok Academy, which will be officiated once the memorandum of understanding between the DYS Juvenile Probation Unit, DOC, and the PSS is signed," Sablan said.

Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Robert Hunter

said the scope of the SOP is such that youth up to the age of 18 for general education and youth up to the age of 22 for special education would receive instructional services within the correctional facility.

"Although the juveniles are detained at DOC, under the Juvenile Justice Act of 2008, DYS is designated as the agency responsible for the services and programs for the incarcerated youth. Through the DYS Family & Youth Enhancement Program, the youth are receiving other rehabilita-

tive programs to include the Canteen Program as a behavioral incentive, the Community Guidance Center Systems of Care Wrap Around Services and Substance Abuse Counseling from Marianas Behavioral Health International," Hunter said.

DYS is currently providing these services to six youth.

"The cases of the incarcerated juveniles are managed by the DYS Juvenile Probation Unit and we are very relieved that a full-time teacher has been committed to the delivery of instructional services at the detention facility. Securing a full-time teacher has always been a challenge, but our staff continued to work closely with the Public School System to fill the void and work with the client home school administrators and teachers to bring in the educational piece for the youth," she said.

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres said that providing rehabilitation services and support to the youth is one of many priorities.

"When we look at the number of incarcerated youth, we really want to improve upon the ways we can help our kids become productive members of the community. At the same time, we need to strengthen our response to juvenile issues with as much resources as we can to curb delinquency and harmful behaviors. I thank DYS, PSS, and Corrections for collaborating on this effort. From the family level to the school level, we need everyone's participation to improve the success and opportunities of our youth and the future of our community," Torres said. (PR)

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB 18-DFEMS-031**

**SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2018 TIME: 10:30 A.M.
"SUPPLY AND DELIVERY FOR TWO FIREFIGHTING PUMPER TRUCKS
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ CLAUDIO K. NORITA
COMMISSIONER, DFEMS
/S/ HERMAN S. SABLON
DIRECTOR, P&S

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
MVA-RFP-18-2009**

For: Local Publication and Media Services

Submission /Closing Date:
Time:

February 23, 2018
3:00 p.m.

Submit sealed proposals to:

Marianas Visitors Authority
Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the Scope of Work on or after **January 16, 2018**, at the **Marianas Visitors Authority, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan**, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified courier services by February 23, 2018, and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the Commonwealth must notify the MVA/ Mr. David B. Muna in writing of their intent to submit a proposal in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. Participants outside the **Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands** must submit a Notice of Intent by any mode of written communication including facsimile at +1-670-664-3237 or email to dmuna@mymarianas.com, and must be received by 5 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time on **February 23, 2018**.

All questions regarding this RFP must be sent to Mr. David B. Muna at dmuna@mymarianas.com or faxed to +1-670-664-3237, **no later than 5 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time on February 09, 2018**.

/s/ Gloria C. Cavanagh
Chairperson, Board of Directors

/s/ Christopher A. Concepcion
Managing Director

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION

Municipality of Tinian and Aguijan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting on Wednesday, January 31, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. at the TCGC Hearing Room.

AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Adoption of Agenda
 - d. Adoption of Minutes
 - 1) December 21, 2017 - Regular Meeting
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS'
- III. REPORTS
 - a. Chair's Report
 - b. Executive Director's Report
- IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - a. Tinian Entertainment Company, Ltd. Casino License
 - b. Alter City Group, Inc. Casino License
- VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION'
- VII. MISCELLANEOUS/ ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

¹Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.

²Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
P.O. BOX 502641, Saipan, MP 96950-2641
Tel: Nos.: (670) 664-3300 – 3302 • FAX: (670) 664-3310
E-mail: govbp@pticom.com

**TO ALL MEDIA SERVICES
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

MESSAGE: The Honorable Ralph Dlg. Torres, Governor and the Honorable Victor B. Hocog, Lt. Governor, through the Board of Parole Office, and pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992", hereby give Official Notice that a Preliminary Hearing is scheduled for **January 29, 2018 (Monday)**, beginning at **10:00 a.m.**, at the Department of Corrections Conference room, located at Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. The following individual(s) will appear before the Hearing Examiner.

- I. Parolee
1. JOSE O. RABAULIMAN Cr. Cs. No: 98-0083 B.O.P No: 08-008

If you have any question or need additional information, please contact the Board of Parole Office at telephone numbers

/s/ Ramon B. Camacho
BOP Chairman

January 24, 2018
Date



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Bank of Guam reaches out to 230 Palau students

HAGATNA, Guam—Bank of Guam hosted financial literacy simulation programs to three Palau high schools, ex-

panding its regional reach to neighboring island branches.

The bank has already hosted presentations in Guam and

Saipan to date, reaching over 1,200 students.

The presentations were made to 230 high school stu-

dents at Palau High School, Mindszenty High, and Palau Mission Academy on Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 15 and 16,

2018, which elicited return invitations to visit the school.

At the same time, outreach was made announcing the

availability of the Bank of Guam Ifit Scholarship applications, which are due March 9, 2018. (PR)

GMS Falcons shine at junior thespian competition

Middle school students of Green Meadow School won multiple places, from first

place to fifth place, at the junior thespian competition held last Jan. 13, 2018, at Marianas

High School campus.

This last pre-regional meet result qualifies most

of the students to the regional competition in February this year.



Middle school students of Green Meadow School pose with their teachers and school principal Mila Songcuan after participating in the junior thespian competition last Jan. 13, 2018, at Marianas High School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Airbag inflator issue prompts Mercedes-Benz recall

Mercedes-Benz USA (MBUSA) is recalling 132,167 of the following vehicles:

- Model year 2013 C250s, C250 Coupes, C350 Coupe 4Matics, C300 4Matics, C350s, C350 Coupes, C63 AMGs, C63 Coupes, E350 Cabrios, E350 Coupes, E550

Mazda6s, CX-7s, and CX-9s recalled

Mazda North American Operations is recalling 70,227 of the following vehicles:

- Model year 2013 Mazda6s and CX-9s sold, or ever registered in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan), and the U.S. Virgin Islands or "Zone A."

- Model year 2010 Mazda6, CX-7 and CX-9 vehicles sold, or ever registered in Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia or "Zone B."

- Model year 2009 Mazda6, CX-7, and CX-9 vehicles ever registered in Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming or "Zone C."

Cabrios, E350 Coupe 4Matics, E550 Coupes, GLK350 4Matics, GLK250 Bluetec 4Matics, GLK350s, SLS Coupes, SLS AMG GT Coupes, and SLS Roadsters sold, or ever registered, in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Puerto Rico,

American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan), and the U.S. Virgin Islands or "Zone A."

- Model year 2010 C300s, C300 4Matics, C63 AMGs, E350 Coupes, E550 Coupes, GLK350s, and GLK350 4Matics ever registered in Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia or "Zone B."

- Model year 2009 C300s, C300 4Matics, C63 AMGs, and C350s ever registered in Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming or "Zone C."

In the event of a crash necessitating deployment of the passenger frontal air bag, these inflators may explode due to propellant degradation occurring after long-term exposure to absolute humidity and temperature cycling.

An inflator explosion may result in sharp metal fragments striking the driver or other occupants resulting in serious injury or death.

WHAT TO DO

Mazda will notify owners, and dealers will replace the front passenger air bag inflator with an alternate inflator, free of charge.

The recall is expected to begin March 9, 2018.

Owners may contact Mazda customer service at 1-800-222-5500. Mazda's number for this recall is 1317F. (www.consumeraffairs.com)

In the event of a crash necessitating deployment of the passenger front airbag, the inflator may explode due to propellant degradation occurring after long-term exposure to absolute humidity and temperature cycling.

An inflator explosion may result in sharp metal fragments striking the driver or other occupants resulting in serious injury or death.

What to do

MBUSA will notify owners, and dealers will replace the passenger frontal air bag module, free of charge.

Parts are currently not available.

Owners will be sent an interim notification starting in February 2018. A second notice will be mailed when ready parts are available.

Owners may contact MBUSA customer service at 1-877-496-3691. (www.consumeraffairs.com)

Road closure on Beach Road

There will be construction and road closures on the northbound lane of Beach Road in between Llat Street and Alas Street in Garapan beginning Jan. 29, 2018, through March 25, 2018.

The road is expected to re-open on March 25, 2018. This will allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s contractor, RNV Construction, to perform renovations on a sewer lift station, S-10.

Due to the closure of the

northbound lane and for the safety of the community, motorists and large vehicles are advised to proceed with caution and take alternative routes when traveling through the area.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center at 664-4282 or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

Monologue

1st place: Sabino Cabrera

2nd place: Areeza Anda

3rd place: Ariel Legaspi

4th place: Darren Tabora

4th place: Liana Daca

5th place: Nicole Sacramento

5th place: Kriselle Drilon

Duet Acting

2nd place: Sabino Cabrera & Cloe Lagmay

4th place: Leunyce Regalado & Jazmyn Lopez

5th place: Kristin Dela Cruz & Josh Coloma

Duet Musical

5th place: Raeka Lantin & Daniel Gonzales

Kilili will address SHRM today

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) will be speaking at today's meeting of the Human Resource Management NMI Chapter about the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act—legislation to extend the CW visa program—at the Pacific Islands Club Charley's Cabaret, from 11:30am to 1:30pm. The presentation is open to the public. Sablan will provide an opportunity for questions. The presentation includes the PIC lunch buffet at the cost of \$20 for SHRM members and \$30 for non-members. Seats are limited, so reserve your seat by contacting Penny Jones by email at penelope.jones@hyatt.com or Denise Montenegro at denise.montenegro@hyatt.com or by telephone at 323-5867/68. (PR)

Survivors, caregivers support meeting on Thursday

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the next Commonwealth Cancer Association support meeting scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 25, 2018, 5:30pm at Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. The guest speaker will be Regina Terlaje, Ayuda Network Inc. program coordinator, and her presentation will on respite service program and training/technical assistance for volunteers, caregivers and family members. To RSVP or for more information, call the CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com. (PR)

Scheduled power outage on Jan. 27

There will be a scheduled power interruption on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018, from 1:30pm to 4:30pm, to allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. line crew to perform line clearing near the primary lines along Haigus Ln. Chalan Piao. Areas to be affected include Kiya 2 (3" partial), affecting Chalan Piao (Haigus Ln., Niyok Dr., Ramona Ln., and Teodoro Dr.). No water well or wastewater lift station will be affected by this outage. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center at 664-4282 or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. (PR)

Underwater detonation training in Guam harbor

ASAN, Guam—U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5 will conduct underwater detonation training in Outer Apra Harbor today, Jan. 24, from 8am to 4pm.

EODMU-5 will detonate one 5-lb explosive at the designated UNDET location on a sandy area of the sea floor. For the safety of the public and participants involved, the Coast Guard will establish a safety zone to restrict access in the vicinity.

EODMU-5 performs underwater detonation training to develop the skills needed to be ready to rapidly respond to operational missions and unexploded ordnance support on Guam and the CNMI.

For the safety of personnel and marine life, the area will be cleared by divers and by lookouts on the surface before, during and after the exercise. All activity will cease temporarily if a person or marine life is seen in the area.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. (PR)

Military training at Warning Area 517, FDM

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. military will conduct training at Warning Area 517 on Jan. 25, from noon to 8pm. The U.S. military will also conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Jan. 26 and 28, from 10am to 11:59pm. It is recommended the public, fishermen and marine tour operators monitor the Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories. (PR)

2018 CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
**STATE LEVEL
SPELLING BEE**
JANUARY 27, 2018 AT 9:00 AM
MULTI-PURPOSE CENTER, SAIPAN

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5th GradeJames Thorson
3rd GradeSelina Villena
4th GradeChit Moe
5th GradeCassandra Fernandez
5th GradeCharles Baybay
4th GradeAuriella Feger
4th GradeNicole Sundiam
5th GradeDereck Rangamar
5th GradeLatisha Anne L. Dejesus
5th GradeOmari Joab
5th GradeEdreanne Joyce Corrales
3rd GradeAshley Cayabyab
5th GradeGlenn Gabril Valdezco
5th GradeClarize Rodriguez
6th GradeJuris Gian Cabarles
3rd GradeJenaya Cheng
5th GradeLhouanne Sison
4th GradeKristina Achas
8th GradeMary Grace Caras
7th GradeMariessa Babauta
6th GradeKiku Tudela
7th GradeElicia Cabrera
7th GradeJuliet Inocencio
8th GradeMaria Ayuyu
8th GradeJanis Taitano
7th GradeRabeya Akter
6th GradeSoomaitah Ferdous
6th GradeAngela Joy Santos Esteban
8th GradeLeirha Erich D. Manalo
7th Grade

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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Congress opts for another Band-Aid

The U.S. Senate found just enough compromise on Monday to end a three-day government shutdown for at least three more weeks. That is good news, all things considered, but also just a fraction of what will be needed to end a monthslong standoff over a federal budget.

First, the encouraging parts of Monday's agreement. The Senate bargain secures a six-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which is vital to nearly 9 million low-income children. It was on the verge of running out of money months after Republicans allowed it to expire. It must be said that this was a needless and particularly cruel bargaining chip. The GOP could have extended the program at any time, but for those whose lives depend on the program, its extension is welcome.

Second, Democrats have obtained a pledge by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to allow a vote on a bipartisan plan to fix the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. In another heedless bit of gamesmanship, President Donald Trump made DACA a pressure point by rescinding his predecessor's executive order, which protected undocumented immigrants brought to this country as children from being deported. Trump gave Congress until early March to reinstate the program through legislative action. Failure to do so would expose an estimated 800,000 people to eviction from this country and a prolonged prohibition on a possible return. That is an unthinkable outcome.

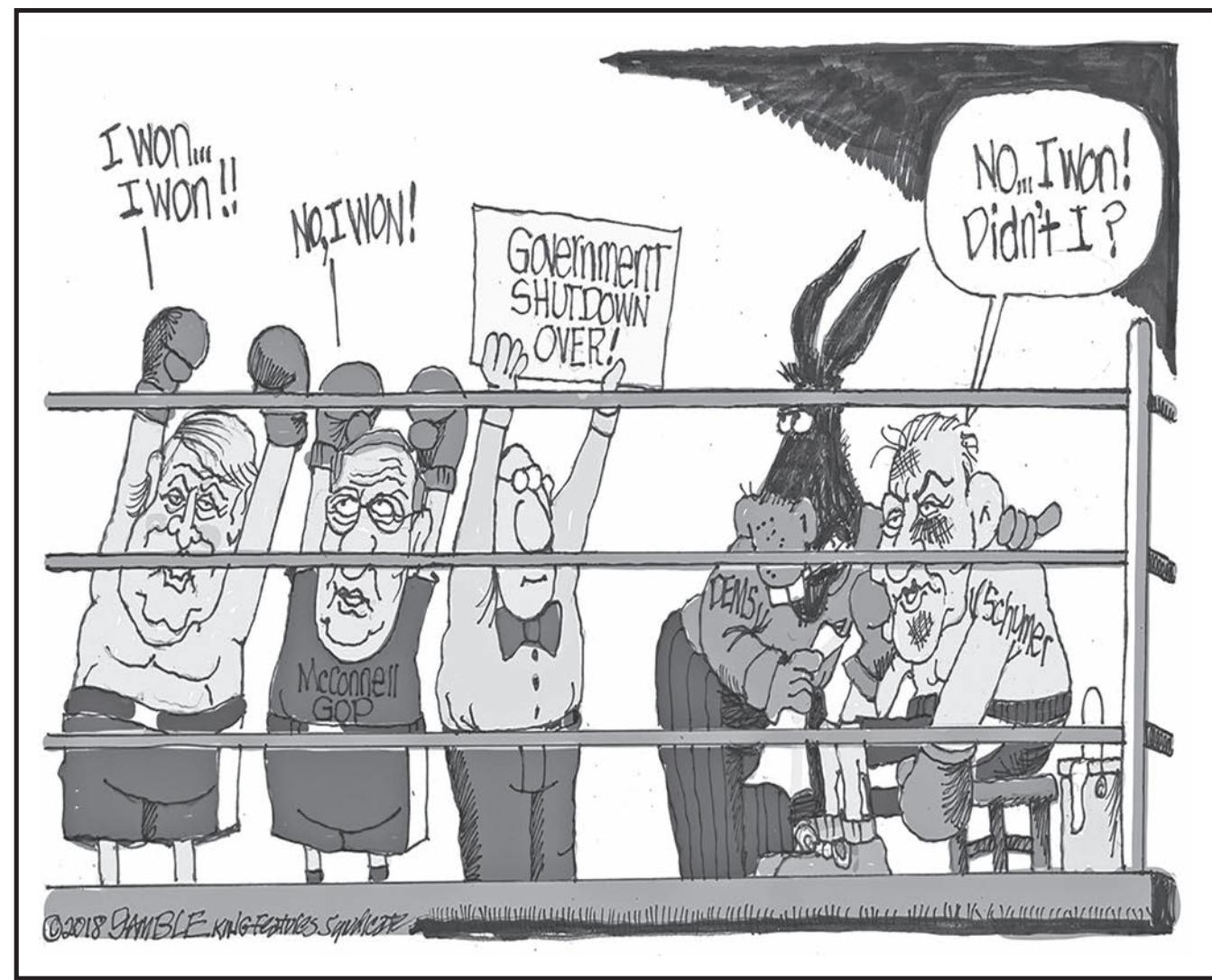
What McConnell offered is minimal, at best. There are no assurances of passage or even specific elements of a bill, simply an agreement to permit a vote. Even Senate passage of a bipartisan DACA fix would not guarantee a similar outcome in the House, where Republicans have held a hard line despite overwhelming public support for a path to citizenship for Dreamers. Some DACA supporters are already taking potshots at Senate Democrats for "caving." But there is a real cost to government shutdowns, with the pain growing as the shutdown lengthens.

Those who support protections for Dreamers and reasonable immigration changes should keep the pressure on their elected officials, not turn on those who have been working toward their goal—including Republicans who have taken part in bipartisan talks. To create a more functional Congress, compromise must be valued, not disparaged. The alternative is endless tribalism and gridlock. Even the chaos of the last few days has been damaging. It must stop.

That said, there should be no more Band-Aids. Republicans have set themselves a tight timeline with this latest patch. They have to achieve by Feb. 8 what has eluded them since last fall—a long-term spending bill that adequately funds domestic programs, addresses military needs and provides a fiscally responsible road map.

The primary burden of leadership is in taking responsibility for what happens. If Republicans need Democratic votes, it is up to them to work toward a real compromise that achieves that goal. Anything else is a failure of leadership and an abdication of responsibility.

(c)2018 Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



Building a better world through travel abroad

I recently returned from three weeks in southern Africa. Though we have always been a traveling family, we had a specific purpose for this trip: to spend time with our son serving in the Peace Corps in Namibia.

After traveling through Zambia and Namibia, we ended in Cape Town, South Africa. There, I was struck by a message on a tourist bus: "Go places. Prosper." And at the airport, Mark Twain's famous quote that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness" was displayed at the British Airways gate.

These messages, of course, were to promote tourism. But to prosper not only relates to financial success, but includes engaging in activities that open minds and hearts. The words that Twain wrote in "The Innocents Abroad," published in 1869, are more relevant today than ever before.

The good news is that Americans travel internationally more than we often think. Nearly 40 percent of Americans have passports, and international travel continues to increase—especially among millennials. But unfortunately, the destinations tend to be places where we are not challenged by differences in culture or lifestyle: 55 percent travel to Canada or Mexico (I suspect much of it to Cancun and Acapulco), while less than 1 percent go to Africa.

Why Americans don't travel to distant places is a matter of debate. Certainly, finances play a big factor: driving across the U.S. border may be the extent of what many can afford. Also, since Americans have less vacation time than others, there often is not enough time to take a long trip where two to three days on the front and back ends may be needed just to get there and back. Another reason is that the diversity within the U.S. is vast. One can experience travel but still have all the amenities of home.

So why then should Americans travel internationally? Probably the most significant benefit to travel is learning about others' culture and daily lives. Today, with the popularity of Airbnb and Uber, you can get a window on the lives of others, and come to better understand your own experiences.

Our Airbnbs were arranged by our globe-trotting son (who would have been fine couchsurfing). In Cape Town, we stayed at a couple's home in an avant-garde part of the city. Living in their home gave us insight into their day-to-day lives. Their books and decor revealed their religious background, language (Afrikaans) and interests. Because Cape Town has been undergoing a dire water shortage, we were kindly reminded that as good visitors we should also be mindful of our usage. The neighborhood we stayed in was vibrant, yet still grappling with racial divisions

By DAVID J. SMITH
The Baltimore Sun

David J. Smith is the president of the Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc. and the author of *Peace Jobs: A Student's Guide to Starting a Career Working for Peace*. He is based in Rockville, Md., and can be reached at david@foragecenter.org. He wrote this for the Baltimore Sun.



post-apartheid. One of our Uber drivers was from Zimbabwe and shared about his struggles to make ends meet in his country, which has faced economic challenges as well as political corruption and violence, and his hopes of making a life in South Africa. While in Namibia we spent an afternoon with our son's host family (as is the practice in the Peace Corps, every volunteer is adopted by a local family). His Namibian parents are both educators, with several children, and they have become close to our son. We partook in "braai"—traditional Namibian (and South African) grilled meat—and shared about our hopes for the future (as well some mutual kidding of our son).

Our travels not only allowed for cultural learning and exposure, but allowed us to experience geography and nature that was new to us including Victoria Falls, the wildlife of Etosha National Park in Namibia, the sand dunes and salt pans of the Namib Desert, and the panoramic coast of South Africa. Following local media, we learned about the political anxieties that exist in South Africa (Americans are not the only ones dealing with political turmoil) as well as the importance of graduation scores for high school students, and how regions in South Africa compete to have the highest ones. And we went to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 years, and were guided by a former political prisoner who now lives on the island with his family along with former prison guards as a means to reconciliation. This serves as an important lesson in building peace.

We prospered for sure. Every day we experienced new dialects, aromas, and trials and tribulations (including two flat tires, travel sickness and getting stuck in the sand). In the end, we came to understand not only the differences we have with others, but more importantly the humanity that connects us: the importance of family, the aspirations for a peaceful and safe future, and the mutual goodwill we shared with those we encountered.

Plenty of blame to go around on shutdown

Republicans called it the “Schumer shutdown,” citing the Senate Democratic leader’s role in blocking the bill to prevent a government shutdown. The Democrats labeled it the “Trump shutdown,” blaming lack of Republican urgency and the president’s shifting positions on the key immigration issue.

But every party involved in the brief federal shutdown bears some blame. And the underlying reasons reflect a pattern that will unfortunately recur in the future, perhaps as soon as three weeks, unless lawmakers—especially the Republican majority—remember that Congress can lead on issues and the Trump White House gets its act together.

Ironically, there is substantial bipartisan agreement on many of the underlying issues, including money for hurricane relief, opioid relief, community health centers and children’s health, and the need to permanently protect the young people brought here illegally as children and temporarily protected by President Barack Obama’s

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY ‘PEPE BATBON’ CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey “Pepe Batbon” Connolly is a retired teacher and poet living on Tinian who taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.

A Trump Twitter Tale Trilogy

A “Very Stable Genius”

A glutton’s fable at the nuclear table

I have today a much much bigger button
it is sitting right on my bigly bigly desk
that Rocket Man is just a missile glutton
my rockets make the world a bigger mess
I have a nuclear button, one that I will push
to pull the trigger my itchy finger’s bigger
than Obama’s, Clinton’s, or either George Bush
to use my finger I need to learn how to figure
I’m “like smart”, a “very stable genius” now
even if Steve Bannon says of me “He’s lost it.”
you are what you eat, I eat junk food for chow
“only I can do it” I’m the one who bossed it
recent comments on DJT “bizarre, strange, infantile”
“less credibility than almost everyone who has
walked on earth” there is mirth to make you smile.

DJT 99% Pure Manure “Stable Genius”

Yes indeed finally DJT tweeted a grain of truth his self description “a very stable genius” sticks the tongues of cows and horses provide the proof they give the genius in their stable lots of licks as they lick a dry teat of our great governing goof Russian oligarchs, billionaire patriarchs, GOP hicks A stable indeed proudly owned by alt right creed but there are few Democratic donkeys in this barn he’s good at shoveling you know what to respond he usually has absolutely no idea what he is saying as he uses tweets all day for his magic policy wand middle class tax payers now shafted are all praying for the ‘stable genius’ to be put out to partisan pasture to spread results of his stinking presidential manure.

On His Golf Course Some Elector’s Remorse

The majority vote win brought a sad election rejection the electoral college helped him slip through the cracks now insulting the DOJ and FBI is his daily predilection secret Congressional meetings gave billionaires less tax now racist slurs at meetings pour forth from his mouth most of his staff say it’s a job he just can not handle he insults foreign countries from the north to the south a right wing rooster leading a GOP school for scandal newspapers, magazines, books, TV discuss his mental fitness reads no critical reports or briefs, but time for the golf course US citizens can turn on their TV’s any day and witness deduce for themselves why they have elector’s remorse he soon begins his time in office for the next three years as the institution of democracy sheds big elephant tears.

2012 executive order that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Here is why everyone, in no meaningful order, is responsible:

■ President Donald Trump: Trump, who sold himself to the American people as a master deal-maker, made no effort to make one. Perhaps it’s because he angered advocates of a DACA fix the last time he tried by saying one day he’d accept whatever Congress passed and then rejecting two days later a bipartisan plan to do just that.

■ Vice President Mike Pence: Unlike prior vice presidents, the former House Republican was AWOL. He has little credibility among Senate Democrats and was in the Middle East, defending Trump’s controversial decision to move the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and attacking Democrats.

■ White House staff: Publicized disagreements among Trump and some staff members created substantial confusion and frustration on Capitol Hill. Trump’s change on DACA proposals is largely blamed on pressure from Chief of Staff John Kelly and senior adviser Stephen Miller, architect of many hardline Trump immigration moves. The same thing apparently happened again last Friday when the White House shot down Schumer’s hopeful characterization of a meeting at which he says he agreed to fund Trump’s “wall” along the U.S.-Mexican border.

■ House Republicans: Because they are dominated by members more conservative than the country and the rules let them ignore minority Democrats, they have repeatedly passed legislation unacceptable to the more bipartisan Senate, especially funding bills stalemated by disagreement over the balance between defense and domestic spending. This time, they passed a bill they knew Senate Democrats would reject.

■ House Democrats: They have no blame because they have no power. House GOP procedures previously blocked their ability to form a bipartisan majority on immigration with less conservative Republicans.

■ Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell: Though his majority is smaller, McConnell has run the Senate like the House, ignoring the Democrats whenever possible and using the rules to block their amendments. He blamed the lack of a clear White House position as a reason for delaying an immigration debate. His prior failure to follow through on health and immigration promises concerned many Democrats.

■ Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer: Under pressure from the DACA youths and their supporters, Schumer and fellow Democrats cast the votes shutting down the government,

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

January is Self-Help Group Awareness Month

January is a time when many of us focus on ourselves, whether it be to lose weight or stop smoking cigarettes. There are times when this task may be more than we can handle ourselves. We may seek out groups where people seeking similar changes gather to support each other.

For those seeking recovery for addictions, groups like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous may have the assistance that we need to meet our goals at ending our drug use.

For those of us needing support in recovery for mental health

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF

The Dallas Morning News



Carl P. Leubsdorf is a columnist for The Dallas Morning News. Readers may email him at carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com.

unrealistically demanding the interim funding bill also protect DACA recipients. They felt they needed to take a stand on an issue where the public favors their position. But their retreat reflected recognition they are politically vulnerable to GOP criticism, especially in pro-Trump states where Democratic senators face tough re-election fights.

By displaying willingness to schedule Senate debate with an open amendment process on DACA, McConnell seemed to accept Tennessee Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander’s plea Saturday he abandoned his argument the Senate would consider immigration “as soon as we figure out” Trump’s stance.

“It is a pretty poor excuse to sit here and say: We can’t deal with President Trump,” Alexander said. “We are the U.S. Senate. We can make our own decisions about DACA” and other issues and present them to the House and to the president.

Of course, it’s not that simple. Even if McConnell keeps his word and a bipartisan Senate majority passes a DACA bill, doubt remains if House GOP leaders would schedule it. But Pennsylvania Rep. Charlie Dent, a prominent GOP moderate, said on MSNBC that a bipartisan bill could pass the House, and the Freedom Caucus chair, North Carolina Rep. Mark Meadows, told MSNBC, “We’re willing to find a deal.” Trump’s position remains disturbingly imprecise.

Another thing not simple is assessing the political impact of the shutdown, though Republicans declared victory and some liberal groups accused the Democrats of surrender. After both the 1996 and 2013 shutdowns, the Democratic White House was seen the initial victor. But when Americans next voted, Democratic President Bill Clinton won in 1996, and congressional Republicans in 2014, suggesting future events will influence ultimate judgments.

needs, the options are far fewer. There is hope, though. I was recently given an opportunity to meet with the group “Afa’nelos” on Rota, whose purpose is “to encourage healthy lifestyles through cultural, nutritional, physical, and holistic activities that benefit the residents of Rota.” Afa’nelos looks at using alternatives to typical mental health treatment such as medications, to approach mental health recovery. We may use art therapy, dance/movement therapy, and even laughter therapy to cope with our symptoms. Afa’nelos looks at activities that we have locally to accomplish these same goals, such as swimming, weaving, farming, and fishing.

When looking for a group to support your individual needs, you may find it easier if it is a group that shares similar interests you may have.

For more information about self-help groups to assist you with your behavioral health needs, please contact NMPASI at 235-7273/4 or visit us online at www.nmpasi.org.

Greg Borja

Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.



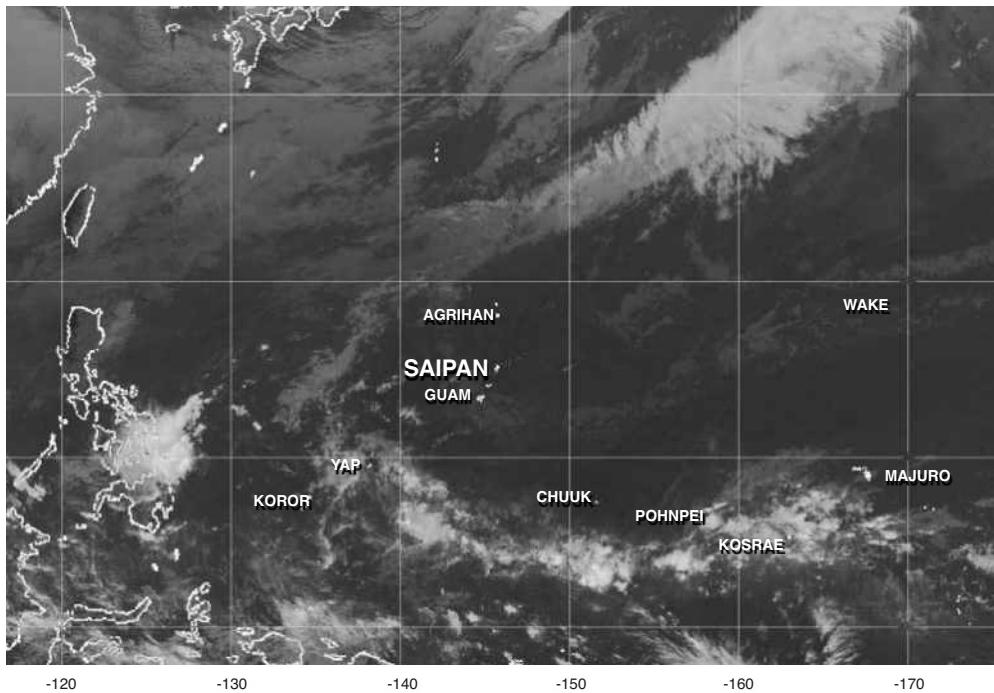
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ▲ 89° | ▼ 78° | ▲ 89° | ▼ 78° | ▲ 89° | ▼ 77° | ▲ 88° | ▼ 77° | ▲ 88° | ▼ 77° |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:18 AM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2018

WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC BETWEEN EQUATOR AND 25N FROM 130E TO 180.

New batch of models delays the shear line by 12 hours from what was previously expected. This usually means either the new time is closer or it will not happen at all. Since shear lines are fairly common this year, opted for the delay at this time. Other than this slight time shift, repopulated the winds to match and repopulated the waves primarily to extend them. Otherwise changes this morning are minimal. Philosophy is unchanged, just time shifted a bit.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

| MICRONESIA | ▼ ▲ °F |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Guam and Rota | Mostly Sunny 86° / 77° |
| Palau | Thunderstorms 83° / 78° |
| Yap | Thunderstorms 85° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms 85° / 79° |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms 83° / 78° |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms 83° / 78° |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms 84° / 80° |

AROUND THE GLOBE

| | ▼ ▲ °F |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Auckland | Ptly Cloudy 82° / 66° |
| Beijing | Mostly Sunny 28° / 10° |
| Hong Kong | Partly Cloudy 70° / 59° |
| Honolulu | Showers 82° / 69° |
| London | Partly Cloudy 50° / 37° |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy 63° / 46° |
| Manila | Showers 90° / 77° |
| Melbourne | Partly Cloudy 91° / 70° |
| Miami | Windy 73° / 66° |
| New York | Sunny 38° / 25° |
| Osaka | Mixed 37° / 30° |
| Paris | Rain 48° / 37° |
| Busan | Partly Cloudy 34° / 19° |
| Rome | Partly Cloudy 59° / 48° |
| Salem | Sunny 60° / 34° |
| San Francisco | Rain 50° / 43° |
| Seoul | Sunny 19° / 5° |
| Tokyo | Mostly Sunny 36° / 23° |
| Washington, DC | Sunny 44° / 28° |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------|
| 1:08 AM | HIGH TIDE | 1.40 |
| 6:59 AM | LOW TIDE | 0.66 |
| 1:25 PM | HIGH TIDE | 1.90 |
| 8:36 PM | LOW TIDE | 0.36 |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 6:47 AM | 6:11 PM |
| Friday | 6:46 AM | 6:12 PM |
| Saturday | 6:46 AM | 6:12 PM |
| Sunday | 6:46 AM | 6:13 PM |
| Monday | 6:46 AM | 6:13 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Today | - | 12:08 AM | 12:16 PM |
| Friday | - | 1:03 AM | 1:03 PM |
| Saturday | - | 2:01 AM | 1:54 PM |
| Sunday | - | 3:01 AM | 2:49 PM |
| Monday | - | 4:04 AM | 3:50 PM |

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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2017

| DEPARTURES | | | | ARRIVALS | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) | | | | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA6394 4:15am 5:05am Daily | | | | UA6393 2:45am 3:35am Daily | | | |
| UA6392 8:40am 9:30am Daily | | | | UA6395 7:15am 8:05am Daily | | | |
| UA6391 1:30pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota | | | | UA6391 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 | | | |
| UA6390 2:20pm 3:10pm 2, 3, 6 | | | | UA6390 12:10pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6 via Rota | | | |
| UA6398 6:05pm 6:55pm Daily | | | | UA6397 4:45pm 5:35pm Daily | | | |
| UA6396 9:50pm 10:40pm Daily | | | | UA6399 8:30pm 9:20pm Daily | | | |
| SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP) | | | | GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) | | | |
| UA6391 1:30pm 2:05pm 1, 4, 5, 7 | | | | UA6390 12:10pm 12:45pm 2, 3, 6 | | | |
| ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) | | | | ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA6391 2:35pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 | | | | UA6390 1:15pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6 | | | |
| SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) | | | | NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN | | | |
| DL297 4:20pm 7:15pm Daily | | | | DL298 10:30am 3:05pm Daily | | | |
| SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) | | | | BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 7C3451 3:10am 6:10am 1, 7 | | | | 7C3452 9:00pm 2:10am+1 4 | | | |
| 7C3451 4:00am 7:05am 4, 5 | | | | 7C3452 9:05pm 2:10am+1 3, 6, 7 | | | |
| SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) | | | | SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| TW308 2:00am 6:05am Daily | | | | 7C3402 9:30am 3:00pm Daily | | | |
| OZ626 2:10am 6:00am 1 | | | | OZ625 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 | | | |
| OZ626 2:50am 6:40am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 | | | | TW307 7:45pm 1:00am+1 Daily | | | |
| UJ652 3:40am 7:30am 1, 4, 5, 7 | | | | OZ625 8:20pm 1:40am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 | | | |
| 7C3403 4:45am 8:30am Daily | | | | UJ651 9:10pm 2:40am+1 3, 4, 6, 7 | | | |
| 7C3401 4:00pm 7:4 | | | | | | | |

Business

Johnson & Johnson loses \$10.7B after sweeping US tax changes

By LINDA A. JOHNSON

AP MEDICAL WRITER

Johnson & Johnson posted a rare quarterly loss, a whopping \$10.71 billion, due to a \$13.6 billion charge related to last month's U.S. tax overhaul.

While the loss was expected and the company's adjusted results beat Wall Street expectations, shares fell more than 4 percent, an unusually big swing for the health care giant.

On Tuesday, J&J reported a big jump in sales, but that was offset by sharply higher spending on production, marketing, administration and research, partly due to one-time charges.

The \$13.6 billion charge is for a tax payment on years of accumulated foreign earnings, now being brought back to the U.S., that amount to more than \$66 billion, Chief Financial Officer Dominic Caruso said in an interview. About \$18 billion of that was held in cash and was taxed at 15 percent, while the remainder was taxed

at a low 8 percent rate.

Caruso told analysts on a conference call that "\$12 billion will come back immediately. We'll immediately use that to fund operations in the U.S."

That will include investing in innovative products and paying shareholder dividends, he said. J&J won't necessarily go on a shopping spree, having made 16 acquisitions totaling \$35 billion last year, including its biggest-ever, \$30 billion to buy Swiss biopharmaceutical company Actelion to enter the lung blood pressure niche.

"This was a strong quarter for Johnson & Johnson, as the pharmaceutical segment ... continues to drive solid growth for the company," Edward Jones analyst Ashtyn Evans wrote to investors.

Despite that, J&J shares closed down \$6.31 at \$141.83.

Evans said she was "scratching her head" over the steep drop, adding it could be due to a combina-



tion of factors: the size of the net loss, investors expecting a stronger financial forecast for 2018, fears that prostate cancer drug Zytiga might get generic competition late this year even though J&J said it won't, or a federal appeals

court ruling invalidating some patients of top seller Remicade, which already has two cheaper competitors.

The maker of biotech drugs and Band-Aids said the fourth-quarter loss amounts to \$3.99 per share. A year earlier, the New Brunswick, New Jersey, company had a net profit

of \$3.81 billion, or \$1.38 per share.

Excluding the tax charge and other one-time gains and costs, earnings came to \$4.78 billion, or \$1.74 per share, topping Wall Street projections by 2 cents.

The world's biggest maker of health care products posted

In this July 16, 2012 file photo, Johnson & Johnson products are displayed in Orlando, Fla. Johnson & Johnson reports earnings, Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017.

revenue of \$20.2 billion, a hair below Street forecasts for \$20.22 billion but up 11.5 percent from a year ago.

Sales of prescription drugs, J&J's largest business, jumped 17.6 percent to \$9.68 billion, led by a 40 percent jump in sales of cancer drugs, including Darzalex, Imbruvica and Zytiga.

Sales of drugs for immune-system disorders rose 5 percent to \$3.1 billion, including recently approved Tremfya for plaque psoriasis. However, revenue from J&J's top-selling medicine, Remicade for rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease and other immune conditions, fell nearly 10 percent due to increasing competition from biosimilars. Those are near-copies of complex biologic drugs "manufactured" inside living cells.

Trump move to tax some imports creates its own risks for US

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump's move Tuesday to tax imported solar cells and washing machines is meant to make good on his vow to reverse decades of U.S. support for free trade and to protect American jobs from foreign competition.

But the tariffs—already denounced by China, Germany and Mexico—are likely to heighten tensions between the United States and its trade partners, slow the U.S. solar-installation business and raise prices for American consumers. And even touchier trade cases lie ahead, involving China's overproduction of steel and aluminum and its theft of trade secrets, with consequences for American industry and workers.

"My administration is committed to defending American companies, and they've been very badly hurt from harmful import surges that threaten the livelihood of their workers," Trump said as he signed the tariffs. "The United States will not be taken advantage of anymore."

Trump had campaigned on the argument that foreign nations had long outmaneuvered the United States at the negotiating table and had unfairly subsidized their own industries at the expense of American jobs. He pledged to return manufacturing jobs to America by killing or renegotiating trade deals and cracking down on such countries as China and Mexico that sell more to the United States than they buy from it.

Almost as soon as he took office, Trump abandoned an Asia-Pacific trade pact negotiated by the Obama administration. And Trump's trade team is engaged in a contentious effort to rewrite the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico.

But until Tuesday, the administration had not imposed major tariffs on imported goods. It is now slapping an immediate tariff of 30 percent on most imported solar modules; the rate will gradually phase out in four years. For large residential washing machines, tariffs will start at up to

50 percent and phase out after three years.

The White House is dusting off a trade weapon not used since President George W. Bush imposed tariffs on imported steel in 2002. The Trade Act of 1974 allows a president to temporarily impose tariffs or other trade barriers on imports that are deemed to damage U.S. industries.

The solar case emerged from a complaint by two U.S.-based companies that manufactured solar cells, the building blocks of solar panels: Suniva Inc., the Georgia-based subsidiary of a Chinese firm, which declared bankruptcy in April; and SolarWorld Americas, the U.S. subsidiary of a German company.

The two companies argued that they had been crushed by an influx of cheap imported solar cells and modules, mostly produced by Chinese companies. China's share of global solar-cell production shot up from 7 percent in 2005 to nearly 70 percent last year. As prices plunged, nearly 30 U.S. plants closed over the past five years.

China tries to quell protests over failed investment scheme

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese authorities are struggling to quell protests following the collapse of an investment scheme police say took as much as \$4.7 billion from millions of depositors.

The implosion of Qianbao.com adds to a string of failures of Chinese financial ventures blamed on fraud or mismanagement that have prompted protests and complaints of official indifference to the suffering of small investors. In a separate case, the founder of an online lender was sentenced in September to life in prison on charges he defrauded investors of \$7.7 billion.

On Monday, hundreds of people marched in freezing weather in the eastern city of Nanjing in Jiangsu province, where Qianbao was founded in 2012, shouting for the government to take action. A video shot by a demonstrator showed police carrying some people away while others shouted, "The Jiangsu government is beating people!"

"Don't organize and don't participate in illegal activities," the official Xinhua

promised returns of up to 60 percent a year. Depositors were paid what Qianbao said were wages for simple tasks such as watching online ads.

Some of the 30 billion yuan (\$4.7 billion) raised from depositors was used to buy businesses including a soccer team and a producer of glycerine, but only 20 of the more than 70 companies Qianbao said it owned really existed, according to a statement by Nanjing police. Profits were too small to pay such high returns, so Qianbao used money from new depositors.

The newspaper Huanqiu reported that in an interview Saturday while in police custody, Zhang "made it clear Qianbao's collapse was due to his own greed," but said reckless investors also had to accept the consequences.

"The two sides used each other in a frenzy of chasing fame and fortune," the newspaper wrote.

Photos released by Xinhua show the balding, bespectacled Zhang in handcuffs and a blue vest as he talked to investigators.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
26,210.81
-3.79
0.014%

S&P
2,839.13
+6.16
0.22%

NASDAQ
7,460.29
+52.26
0.71%

In U.S. dollar terms

EXCHANGE RATES

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Australian Dollar | 1.2476 |
| British Pound | 0.7130 |
| Canadian Dollar | 1.2409 |
| Chinese Yuan | 6.2793 |
| Euro | 0.8121 |

Hong Kong Dollar **7.8185**

Indian Rupee **63.7857**

Japanese Yen **109.9670**

Malaysian Ringgit **3.8737**

New Zealand Dollar **1.3581**

Philippine Peso **50.0344**

Russian Ruble **56.3253**

Singapore Dollar **1.3147**

South Korean Won **1044.34**

Swiss Franc **0.9549**

Taiwan Dollar **28.7813**

Thailand Baht **31.6485**

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ACME DISPLAY GLASS SHELF \$69.95

ADSLEY SPACE SAVER 3PC BATH SET \$35.95

ALL DAHDOL BATHROOM SETS 10% OFF

Nation

2 dead, 17 injured in KY school shooting; suspect held

BENTON, Ky. (AP)—A 15-year-old student killed two classmates and hit a dozen others with gunfire Tuesday, methodically firing a handgun inside a crowded atrium at his rural Kentucky high school.

"He was determined. He knew what he was doing," said Alexandria Caporali, who grabbed her stunned friend and ran into a classroom as their classmates hit the floor.

"It was one right after another—bang, bang, bang, bang, bang," she added. "You could see his arm jerking as he was pulling the trigger."

He kept firing, she said, until he ran out of ammunition and took off running, trying to get away. Police arrested their suspect moments later, leading him away in handcuffs to be charged with murder and attempted murder. Authorities did not identify the gunman responsible for the nation's first fatal school shooting of 2018, nor did they release any details about a motive.

Kentucky State Police Lt. Michael Webb said detectives are looking into his home and background.

"He was apprehended by the sheriff's department here on site, at the school, thankfully before any more lives could be taken," Webb said.

Seventeen students were



Family members escort their children out of Marshal North Middle School near Palma, Ky., Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018, after being transported from the Marshal High School.



Source: AP, Graphic: TNS

injured, 12 of them hit with bullets and five others hurt in the scramble as hundreds of students fled for their lives from Marshall County High School. Many jumped into cars, or ran across fields and down the highway, some not stopping until they reached a McDonald's restaurant more than a mile away. Parents left their cars on both sides of an adjacent road, desperately trying to find their teenagers. "No one screamed. It was almost

completely silent as people just ran," said Caporali, 16. She said most students knew what to do because they are drilled throughout the year on how to respond to an active shooter at school.

The two fatalities were 15 years old: Bailey Nicole Holt died at the scene, and Preston Ryan Cope died later at a hospital, Kentucky State Police Commissioner Richard Sanders said. Cope was among six young men flown about

120 miles (193 kilometers) to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. Sanders said the five others were in critical condition Tuesday night.

The attack marked the year's first fatal school shooting, 23 days into 2018, according to data compiled by the Gun Violence Archive, which

Carneal, then 14, opened fire there about two years before the fatal attack at Columbine High School in Colorado, ushering in an era when mass school shootings have become much more common.

Meanwhile, in the small North Texas town of Italy, a 15-year-old girl was recovering Tuesday after police said she was shot by a 16-year-old classmate in her high school cafeteria on Monday, sending dozens of students scrambling for safety. Police in Louisiana, meanwhile, are investigating shots fired Monday as students gathered outside their charter school.

"It's horrifying that we can no longer call school shootings 'unimaginable' because the reality is they happen with alarming frequency," said former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who survived being shot in the head in 2011. She called on Congress to strengthen gun laws.

Tuesday's shooting, moments before classes would have begun, disrupted some happy moments in the noisy "commons" area at the center of the school, where several hallways meet and students gather between classes.

ACROSS THE NATION

California man gets life for buying Filipino children

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—A California man was sentenced to life in federal prison Tuesday for buying Filipino children for sex and pornography in what prosecutors called one of most "lurid, willful, and disturbing" child exploitation cases in the nation. U.S. District Judge John Mendez said he was sickened by the crimes committed by Michael Carey Clemans, 57, of Sacramento. Prosecutors said he gave detailed instructions on how young girls should be posed, how their hair should be cut, whether they should wear makeup or have their bodies oiled. "His true plan was to find young girls, virgins, and then go have sex with them," Assistant U.S. Attorney Andre Espinosa said. "A 57-year-old man doesn't have sex with a 7-year-old girl—he rapes her." The sentence came after defense attorney Daniel Olmos argued that the judge should consider Clemans' cooperation in helping authorities catch his co-conspirators. But Mendez agreed with prosecutors, saying the "unthinkable, inexcusable" crimes outweighed

the assistance. "He has taken away the childhood of those victims," Mendez said.

Gay couple sues US for denying citizenship to 1 twin son

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ethan and Aiden Dvash-Banks are toddler twins who share almost everything: the same toys, the same nursery, the same clothes and the same parents. Everything but a toothbrush and U.S. citizenship. To remedy what their parents, a gay married couple, view as an injustice, Ethan Dvash-Banks became a plaintiff at the tender age of 16 months in a federal lawsuit against the U.S. State Department that seeks the same rights his brother has as an American citizen. "What we're trying to do is pursue justice for Ethan," said Elad Dvash-Banks, his biological dad, "and correct a wrong that the State Department is continuing to pursue that might affect other couples." The lawsuit was one of two filed Monday by an LGBTQ immigrant rights group that said the State Department is discriminating against same-sex binational couples by denying their children citizenship at birth. The cases filed

in Los Angeles and Washington by Immigration Equality said the children of a U.S. citizen who marries abroad are entitled to U.S. citizenship at birth no matter where they are born and even if the other parent is a foreigner.

San Francisco swaps Columbus Day for Indigenous Peoples Day

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—San Francisco supervisors have replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, saying they want to honor Native American people and condemn the atrocities they suffered. Los Angeles and Minneapolis are among the cities that already renamed the holiday to celebrate people who were here before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Tuesday's vote in San Francisco upset some Italian Americans who say they're losing the October holiday meant to celebrate their unique heritage. The vote was 10-to-1 with Supervisor Aaron Peskin voting no. He represents the historically Italian North Beach neighborhood. Supervisor Norman Yee said he hopes the board can find a way to honor Italian Americans.

Undersea quake sends Alaskans fleeing from feared tsunami



Source: AP
Graphic: Tribune News Service

their meals, speaking little of the quake.

The tremor reminded King of a deadly 1964 quake that generated tsunamis that killed 129 people and wreaked widespread devastation—events that remain vivid in the memories of many Alaskans.

"It started out just like the big one," she said. "It was very slow and rolling, a good resemblance to the big one. That's what scared us."

Tuesday's quake was recorded at 12:32 a.m. in the Pacific Ocean about 170 miles southeast of Kodiak, home to one of the nation's largest Coast Guard bases.

It prompted the warning across thousands of miles of Alaska's southern coast, from Attu in the Aleutian Islands to Canada's border with Washington state. Kodiak is about 200 miles (321 kilometers) south of Anchorage, the state's largest city, which was not under a tsunami threat.

Elsewhere in the United States, Washington state, Oregon, California and Hawaii were under tsunami watches, which eventually were lifted. Officials in Japan say there was no tsunami threat there.

danger on the coast. Go to high ground or move inland. Listen to local news."

There were no reports of damage, not even on Kodiak Island, the closest land to the epicenter. Only after the all-clear was sounded did a little levity emerge. In Kodiak, a customer's Facebook post suggested a post-evacuation meal at King's Diner: "Hungry? Tsunami got you up early?"

Eleanor King opened the diner at the usual time of 6 a.m. By the time customers started arriving, the excitement had passed and people just sat around quietly eating

Asia

Skepticism, worry amid preparation for Rohingya repatriation

YANGON, Myanmar

(AP)—Myanmar says it's ready for a gradual repatriation of Muslim Rohingya refugees chased out by the Buddhist-majority country's military. Bangladesh says it's preparing for the transfer, but it might need more time.

And the refugees themselves? In interviews in recent weeks with dozens of the nearly 700,000 Rohingya who've poured into Bangladesh since August in what's become the world's worst refugee crisis, The Associated Press has found deep skepticism, if not outright terror, about returning to a place where they say their homes were burned, their wives, sisters and mothers raped, and their friends and neighbors slaughtered.

The two nations' border seemed calm Tuesday, despite some sense, in Myanmar, at least, that the proposed transfer of refugees might still go forward.

"No matter what, from our side, Myanmar is ready to start the process, but Bangladesh



Rohingya children and refugees raise their hands and shout that they won't go back to Myanmar during a demonstration at Kutupalong near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, Monday, Jan. 22, 2018. AP

may have difficulties, causing a delay in sending refugees back," said Win Myat Aye, Myanmar's social welfare minister.

If the desires of the refugees

themselves are considered, it won't happen any time soon. In the sprawling camps that cover the hills south of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, along the border with Myanmar, the Rohingya say they want to return to their burned villages, but only with strong outside monitoring of their safety and living conditions.

"How can we go back to Myanmar without anyone guaranteeing our security," said Alam, a Rohingya in the Bulakhali refugee camp in Bangladesh, who, like many Rohingya, goes only by one

name. "If we would be given homes in our villages that were burned, then we will go back."

More than 680,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh to escape a crackdown by Myanmar's military that began following attacks by a Rohingya militant group on Aug. 25. The United Nations and the United States have described the crackdown as "ethnic cleansing." The U.N. human rights chief has also suggested that it may be genocide.

The two countries have agreed to a two-year repa-

triatory process set to begin Tuesday. But officials in Bangladesh on Monday said a number of issues remained unresolved, in particular worries that refugees were being forced to return.

Abul Kalam, a Bangladesh relief official, said by phone from Cox's Bazar that officials are preparing lists of potential returnees.

"We are doing our work. This is a human process, and it needs the preparing of lists, proper verification, coordination with Myanmar and other departments and agencies here," he

said. "Both sides have agreed to execute it and the process has started. I don't see any problem in implementing the deal."

There's little sign of that, however, at the border.

A local government official, Khaleda Begum, called the border calm. She told the AP that she saw two men and one woman with their belongings enter Bangladesh in the morning from Myanmar.

"I asked them who they are," she said. "They told me they were coming from Myanmar to get to Kutupalong (refugee) camp."

Win Myat Aye said Myanmar has provided Bangladesh with a list of 700 Rohingya and 400 Hindu refugees who have been verified as eligible for repatriation. Only refugees with identity documents—which most Rohingya lack—will be allowed back into Myanmar.

Many in Myanmar see Rohingya as illegal migrants from Bangladesh, although many families have lived in Myanmar for generations. They have been denied citizenship, freedom of movement and other basic rights.

Activists rip Kim Jong Un's photo in Olympic protest

SEOUL, South Korea

(AP)—Anti-Pyongyang activists on Wednesday ripped photos of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in the latest protests in Seoul against South Korea's outreach to North Korea over next month's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Despite drawing verbal outbursts from North Korea, the protests have yet to meaningfully affect preparations for the games, which South Korean President Moon Jae-in views as an opportunity to improve relations after tensions over the North's nuclear program.

A 15-member North Korean women's ice hockey team consisting of 12 players, a coach and support staff was scheduled to arrive in South Korea on Thursday to begin training with South Korean athletes for a unified team that will compete at the Olympics.

South Korea has also sent a group of officials to North Korea to inspect preparations for a joint cultural event at the North's scenic Diamond

Mountain and a practice session for the countries' non-Olympic skiers at the North's Masik ski resort the Koreas plan to hold before the start of the Olympics. The rivals have also agreed to jointly march under a "unification" flag during the Feb. 9 opening ceremony and for a North Korean art troupe to perform in Seoul and Gangneung, which will host the skating, hockey and curling events.

Still, Wednesday's protest at Seoul's National Assembly, led by North Korea-born activist Park Sang-hak, may trigger an angry response from the North, which is extreme sensitive to what it sees as insults to its supreme leadership.

"This is the uniform will of the 32,000 North Korean defectors who have put their lives on the line in their journey to South Korea," Park shouted as he and other activists ripped three photos of Kim and threw the pieces into the air in protest of what they called

the "Pyongyang Olympics."

Park, who is hated in the North over his yearlong campaign of flying balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border, was joined by eight other activists.

North Korea's state media lashed out after a different group of South Korean conservatives burned Kim's photo and a North Korean flag in downtown Seoul on Monday while a North Korean delegation visited to prepare for performances by the art troupe. The North called the protesters "human scum" and demanded Seoul apologize, "sternly punish" those involved and prevent such acts from happening.

Asked about the protests and the North Korean response, Baik Tae-hyun, spokesman of Seoul's Unification Ministry, called for national unity to ensure the successful hosting of the Olympics.

"North Korea is an Olympic participant so there's a need to properly treat them as

such," he said. "The South and North must sincerely fulfill the agreements between them and also their agreements with the International Olympic Committee."

North Korea agreed earlier this month to send a delegation to the Olympics, in the first formal talks between the rivals in about two years. Its delegation at the Feb. 9-25 games is to include officials, athletes, a cheering group, journalists, an art troupe and the taekwondo demonstration team.

The reconciliation mood between the Koreas began after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said in a New Year's speech that he was willing to send a delegation to the Olympics. While many other South Koreans have welcomed the North's participation as an opportunity to ease tension, there are also skeptics who view Kim's overture as an attempt to weaken U.S.-led international sanctions against the North and buy time to further advance his nuclear weapons program.

PH volcano spreads lava almost 2 miles from crater

LEGAZPI, Philippines

(AP)—Lava fountaining regularly from the Philippines' most active volcano has flowed up to 3 kilometers (1.86 miles) from the crater in a dazzling but increasingly dangerous eruption.

Mount Mayon has spewed lava up to 600 meters (2,000 feet) high at times Tuesday and early Wednesday and its ash plumes stretched up to 5 kilometers (3 miles) above the crater. Lava flows in two gullies had advanced down the volcano's slopes more than a kilometer (.6 miles) and pyroclastic flows—superheated gas and volcanic debris—had reached 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the crater in one area, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said Wednesday morning.

An explosion from the crater at nightfall Tuesday was capped by one of the most massive lava displays since Mayon started erupting more than a week ago. Authorities on Monday expanded the no-go zone to 8 kilometers (5 miles) from the crater and have warned a violent eruption may occur in hours or days, characterized by more rumblings and pyroclastic flows that will vaporize everything in their path.

At least 56,217 people

were taking shelter in 46 evacuation camps Tuesday and army troops and police were helping others leave the danger zone.

Authorities, however, struggled to prevent villagers from sneaking back to check on their homes and farms and to watch a popular cockfight in Albay's Santo Domingo town despite the risks and police patrols and checkpoints.

In a sign of desperation, Cedric Daep, a provincial disaster response official, told a news conference that he has recommended electricity and water supplies be cut within the no-go zones to discourage residents from returning.

"If pyroclastic flows hit people, there is no chance for life," Daep said. "Let us not violate the natural law, avoid the prohibited zone, because if you violate, the punishment is the death penalty."

Volcanic ash has darkened the skies over nearby villages in coconut-growing Albay province, where Mayon lies.

More than 30,000 ash masks, along with food, water and medicine, have been sent to the region, but officials have warned that relief supplies may run out by mid-February if the eruption continues and new supplies don't arrive in time.

World

Beating back IS in Syria raises new challenges for US

WASHINGTON (AP)—For the last few years, the United States could neatly sum its objective in Syria in a single, uncontroversial bullet point: fighting the Islamic State group. Now that the extremists have been squeezed from all but the last bits of their former territory, the Trump administration is struggling to define the boundaries of its mission, and how and when America's lengthy engagement will end.

A crisis between the U.S. and Turkey, triggered by the latter's new military offensive in Syria, has laid bare how a dizzying array of alliances in Syria is growing even more convoluted in the absence of IS as a major force. Either the Americans must abandon the Kurds who fought alongside them in Syria, or a profound rift with a NATO ally appears all but inevitable.

■ ■ ■

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. military officials say American airstrikes in Syria on Saturday killed up to 150 Islamic State fighters in a command center in the Middle Euphrates River Valley.

The U.S.-led coalition fighting the Islamic State says the strikes were near As Shafah, which is north of Abu Kamal in eastern Syria. They targeted an IS headquarters and were assisted by Syrian Democratic Forces.



Turkish Army soldiers form a convoy of armoured personnel carriers near the border with Syria, in the outskirts of Hassa, Turkey, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018. AP

Who watched the area before the attack.

The coalition says there was a heavy concentration of fighters at the site and they appeared to be preparing to move. The large number of fighters killed in the attack underscores U.S. assertions that the Islamic State group continues to be a threat in Syria and hasn't

been defeated. **The coalition says only IS fighters were killed in the strikes.**

■ ■ ■

Although Turkey has long been incensed by U.S. military support for Syrian Kurdish fighters, calling them terrorists, the U.S. could make a compelling case while the Kurds spearheaded the anti-

IS fight. As IS recedes as an immediate threat, the legs of that argument are falling away, fueling growing Turkish outrage that even the Trump administration acknowledges has some merit.

"This is a tough circle to square. It's the ultimate in heavy diplomatic lifting," said Frederic Hof, who oversaw Syria policy in the Obama ad-

ministration's first term and is now at the Atlantic Council.

The Islamic State's retreat also has forced the U.S. to stretch thinner its legal rationale for operating in Syria. Doing so has raised delicate questions about whether Congress and the American people have truly signed off on a mandate for Syria that goes far beyond killing terrorists.

Senior Trump administration officials said they need no additional authorization to be in Syria because IS remains a serious and persistent threat, requiring a continued U.S. presence to ensure it doesn't regroup and again imperil Syria's future. To keep IS on its heels, America's military, diplomats and aid workers will work to stabilize the country and restore basic services in areas freed from IS control, while trying anew to engineer a political solution to the intractable civil war whose chaos IS so effectively exploited.

WORLD BRIEFS

Car bombs kill at least 27 in east Libya city of Benghazi

BENGHAZI, Libya (AP)—Twin car bombs exploded as people left a mosque in a residential area of the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi on Tuesday night, killing 27 and wounding over 30 in an attack timed to cause mass casualties among first responders, officials said. Capt. Tarek Alkharraz, spokesman for military and police forces in Benghazi, said the first explosion went off in the Salmani neighborhood around 8:20 p.m. Tuesday and the second bomb went off a half hour later as residents and medics gathered to evacuate the wounded. Local health official Hani Belras Ali said at least 27 people died and 32 were wounded. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombings. The United Nations condemned the attack on social media, saying that direct or indiscriminate attacks on civilians are prohibited under international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes.

Belgium: Police shoot man with knife at Ghent train station

BRUSSELS (AP)—A prosecutor's spokeswoman in Belgium says police in the city of Ghent shot a man armed with a knife in the main entrance hall of a train station. Ghent prosecutor's spokeswoman An Schoonjans said in a telephone interview that the man was seriously injured and fighting for his life in a hospital on Tuesday night. She said additional details would have to await an investigation. The busy Ghent St. Pieters train station had to be partially closed off after the incident. Belgium lowered its terrorism threat a notch on Monday, from the second-highest level to the second-lowest. There was no immediate indication whether the train station event was terror-related.

'I love Trump,' Uganda's leader says, despite vulgar remark

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP)—Uganda's president says he loves President Donald Trump and that he should be praised for not mincing words. "I love Trump because he tells Africans frankly," President Yoweri Museveni said Tuesday, shortly after the U.S. ambassador apologized for Trump's recent reference to African nations as "shithole countries." "I don't know whether he was misquoted or whatever. But he talks to Africans frankly," Museveni said. "In the world, you cannot survive if you are weak." The Ugandan leader was addressing members of the regional East African Legislative Assembly. Several African nations have expressed shock and condemnation at Trump's remark. He has denied using that language while others present say he did.

Trump's global gag rule goes far beyond abortion, groups say

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—President Donald Trump's dramatic expansion of a ban on U.S. funding to foreign organizations that promote or provide abortions has left impoverished women around the world without treatment for HIV, malaria and other diseases, health groups say, calling it "devastating" because Trump went where no administration had gone before.

Trump in his first working day in office revived the so-called global gag rule. He expanded on previous versions so that for the first time foreign NGOs that even discuss abortion as an option are barred not only from about \$575 million in U.S. family planning funds but also an estimated \$8.8 billion in U.S. global health aid. And they must certify that none of their non-U.S. funding goes for abortion-related activities.

Tuesday marks one year since Trump's decision, and health organizations are sharing the first effects of the shift by the United States,

the world's largest health donor. The Trump administration, cheered by anti-abortion groups such as the Susan B. Anthony List for no longer "exporting abortion," is expected to release its own assessment.

Last week, London-based Marie Stopes International announced it faces a funding gap of \$80 million in the 37 countries where it works, with more than 2 million women risking the loss of contraception services. About 870,000 risk unsafe abortions.

Africa has been hardest hit. In Zimbabwe, where the health system is in tatters amid a plummeting economy, Marie Stopes has cut in half its outreach sites from 1,200 to 600. "That means I will have children against my will," one affected mother of four told country director Abebe Shibu, who said they had been reaching at least 150,000 women per year.

Some areas are so remote that phone service doesn't exist, cow carts transport women

in labor and many people have no idea who Trump is, Zimbabwe outreach team leader Future Gwena said. They started from zero in teaching about reproductive and sexual health where a conservative culture says young women shouldn't show interest.

"We created this awareness and told them they are valuable," said Gwena, whose work included delivering babies. "And now we are leaving them. It's very sad."

Health workers say Trump's expansion of the global gag rule is especially damaging because NGOs increasingly offer a range of services in such communities. Closing an outreach center means that treatment for HIV and other diseases, for both men and women, disappears as well.

"The architects of the Trump global gag rule have created a policy that will disrupt and reverse the United States' long-held development goal of improving health worldwide," the U.S.-based Guttmacher Institute has said

. "Notably, the Trump administration specifically included the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief under the gag rule."

After decades of the on-again, off-again nature of the previous global gag rule—with Republican presidents applying it and Democratic ones rescinding it—those in family planning had some idea of what was coming under Trump. Until he expanded the restrictions, that is.

"For the rest of the global health community this is a huge wake-up call," said Robin Gorna with SheDecides, a global movement that sprang up last year to raise money to help fill the U.S. gap and brought in \$450 million throughout 2017. "The HIV community, for example, was ill-prepared for it ... It's really exceptionally problematic."

On Tuesday, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance said it is losing up to \$60 million in funding over the next three years.

Environment

2017 one of three hottest years on record

By AMINA KHAN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Even without the help of El Nino, 2017 was a top-three scorcher for planet Earth.

Global temperatures last year were the third-highest since scientists began keeping records in 1880, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Measurements from NASA placed it even higher, coming in second over the last 138 years.

Both agencies said the average global surface temperature in 2017 was only slightly below the record-high temperature seen in 2016.

Two years ago, the average temperature across land and ocean surfaces jumped 1.69 degrees above the 20th century average of 57 degrees, according to NOAA. It remained high last year, coming in at 1.51 degrees above the previous century's average.

That makes the last three years — 2015, 2016 and 2017 — the hottest ones since 1880. In fact, both analyses agree that five of the hottest years have occurred just since 2010.

"The fact that 2017 was so warm in a year without El Nino should make very clear how rapidly Earth's global temperature is increasing," said Noah Diffenbaugh, a climate scientist at Stanford University who was not involved with either NASA's or NOAA's report.

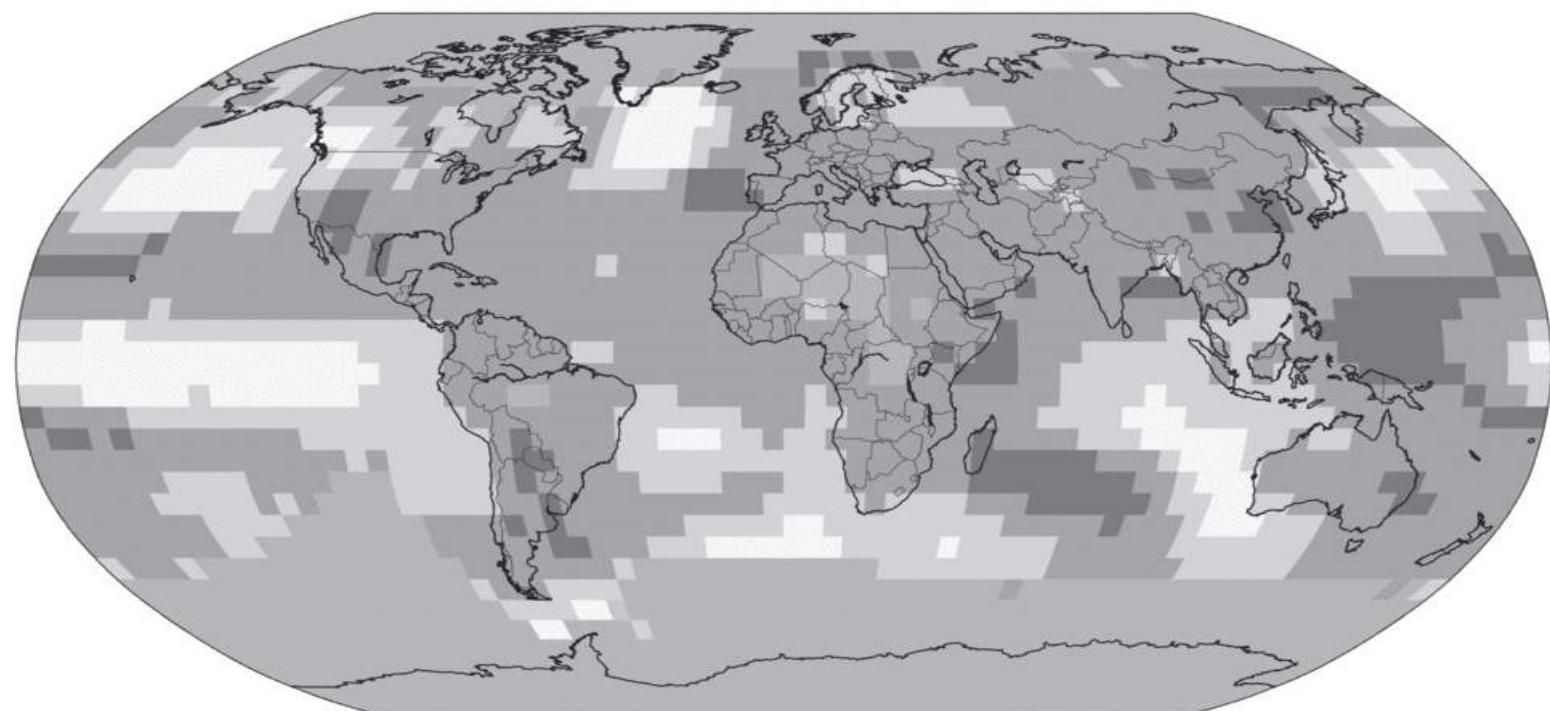
Although the NASA and NOAA data announced Thursday have slight statistical differences, they clearly show that global warming continues its climb, scientists said.

"The annual change from year to year can bounce up and down... but the long-term trends are very clear, especially since the mid-20th century,"

Land and ocean temperature percentiles

January-December 2017





Source: NOAA

Graphic: Tribune News Service

TNS

Map of temperature in 2017.

said Derek Arndt, chief of the monitoring branch of NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information.

The results were buttressed by analyses from the United Kingdom Met Office and the World Meteorological Organization, which also ranked 2017 as a top-three year for recorded global temperatures.

Apart from a few cold spots, "the planet is warming remarkably uniformly," said Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, which uses satellites to monitor Earth's climate.

Although global temperatures differed across continents, virtually all of them felt the heat.

South America experienced

its second-warmest year since continental records began in 1910, according to NOAA data. Asia felt its third-warmest, Africa its fourth-warmest and Europe its fifth-warmest year on record. North America and Oceania, a region that includes Australia, Polynesia and several other island chains, felt their sixth-warmest years on record.

The record-breaking temperatures in 2016 were fueled slightly by El Nino, a multi-year weather pattern that can result in higher regional temperatures. But 2017 was warm even without that additional help, going through a fairly "neutral" year as the pattern transitioned toward the cooler La Niña phase.

Although global temperatures differed across continents, virtually all of them felt the heat.

South America experienced

"It was the warmest non-El Nino year on record," said Michael Mann, a climate scientist at Pennsylvania State University who was not involved with either government analysis.

Data from the National Snow and Ice Data Center showed that Arctic sea ice last year covered 4.01 million square miles. That marks the second-smallest extent since 1979, when records began.

Antarctic sea ice covered only 4.11 million square miles in 2017, breaking the previous record set in 1986 by 154,000 fewer square miles.

Global temperatures have been rising steadily over the last several decades, fueled in large part by emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse

gases that result from burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests and other human activity.

The warming trend has caused sea levels to rise and led to an uptick in extreme weather events, scientists said.

"We are now clearly seeing the impact of human-caused climate change in the form of unprecedented droughts, wildfires, floods and superstorms," Mann said. He pointed to a heavy-hitting 2017 season that included Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Each of those storms cost the United States far in excess of \$1 billion, according to NOAA.

"The effects of climate change are no longer subtle," he said.

The excess carbon dioxide

has also made oceans more acidic, causing long-term damage to corals and many other marine species, research shows.

Members of the Trump administration have indicated a reluctance to recognize and respond to the threats associated with human-caused climate change. President Donald Trump announced last year that he would be pulling the United States out of the 2015 Paris climate accord. His administration has also pushed to remove protections from some public lands and to open waters to drilling. Meanwhile, civil servants with climate science and environmental expertise say they're being sidelined.

After 3 years, orphaned manatee leaves rehabilitation center for open waters

By MARTIN VASSOLO
MIAMI HERALD

MIAMI—Last time Junebug the manatee saw open waters, she was a couple of months old, recently orphaned, and her species was endangered.

But on Thursday, after nearly three years in rehabilitation and a reclassification of the species, the West Indian sea cow boarded a truck in Miami bound for Tampa to join a group of about 600 others in warmer waters.

Junebug's progress will be closely monitored, since neonatal orphan manatee deaths

accounted for 116 of the 538 recorded in Florida waters last year, said Dr. Maya Rodriguez, a veterinarian at Miami Seaquarium. The total death toll was the third-highest recorded in state history, according to the Tampa Bay Times.

This despite last year's decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service downgrading manatees' protected status from endangered to "threatened." Manatees had been considered endangered since 1967, when the first endangered species list was published.

"Rescued neonatal orphan manatees are the most chal-

lenging difficult manatees to be released back to the wild because they are so naive to the wild environment," Rodriguez said in a statement.

And you can cheer her on at home, as she was fitted with a satellite-tracking belt and her movements will be broadcast online at www.wildtracks.org as part of the Manatee Rehabilitation Partnership. Junebug will be tracked for about a year, until next winter.

Junebug, who was bottle fed at the Miami Seaquarium for more than a year and later transferred to an aquarium in Ohio, completed her last phase

of rehabilitation in Miami. During the process, Junebug gained 850 pounds. She weighed about 70 pounds when rescuers originally found her.

The Miami Seaquarium currently houses nine rescue manatees. They released at least 10 last year. Junebug was the aquarium's second release of the week, said animal care supervisor Jessica Schiffhauer, and another one is scheduled for next week.

Although Junebug was rescued off the coast of Naples, she will be released in a "warm water site" near Teco Power Plant in Tampa.

The waters there are roughly 20 degrees warmer than surrounding waters as of Thursday, Schiffhauer said.

The idea, Schiffhauer said, was to release Junebug—who hasn't endured a winter in the wild — on one of the year's colder days so she would remember to return to the warm water site in the future.

"Our goal is to see how they make it through the next winter," she said.

So how does one get 920 pounds of manatee into the back of a truck?

A crane helps.

Inside a shallow enclosure,

a team of employees helped wrap Junebug in a blue tarp and pushed her into a large crate. A crane operator then hoisted her a couple of dozen feet into the air and slowly lowered her into the rear of the six-wheeled vehicle.

Before Junebug left, she gave one trainer a parting gift. Unhappy inside the crate, Junebug thrashed, sending a support beam flying toward the trainer.

He escaped mostly unscathed, but Junebug got her message across.

"She let us know she was ready to go," Schiffhauer said.

Life & Style

In Oscar nominations, fresh voices lead the way

NEW YORK (AP)—The Academy Awards showered outsiders, on screen and off, with milestone-setting nominations that celebrated Guillermo del Toro's full-hearted ode to outcasts "The Shape of Water," embraced first-time filmmakers like Greta Gerwig and Jordan Peele, and made "Mudbound" director of photography Rachel Morrison the first woman ever nominated for best cinematography.

In nominations that spanned young and old, studio blockbusters and passion-fueled indies, the 90th annual Academy Awards on Tuesday gave many who have long been shunned by the movie business—women directors, transgender filmmakers, minority actors, even Netflix—something to cheer about.

Leading all nominees with 13 nods, including best picture, was "The Shape of Water," by veteran Mexican filmmaker del Toro, whose Cold War-era fantasy is about a mute office cleaner (Sally Hawkins) who falls in love with an amphibious creature. But the nominations also carried forward some of the ongoing reckoning of the Me Too movement that has been felt especially acutely in Hollywood, where male filmmakers outnumber women by a ratio of approximately 12-to-1.

Gerwig, the writer-director of the nuanced coming-of-age tale "Lady Bird," became just the fifth woman nominated for best director, following Lina Wertmüller, Jane Campion, Sofia Coppola and Kathryn Bigelow, the sole woman to win, for "The Hurt Locker." Speaking by phone Tuesday from Los Angeles, Gerwig said the distinction was extremely meaningful.

"When I think about Kathryn Bigelow winning and me sitting there watching it and feeling suddenly like, 'It's possible,'" said Gerwig. "To be nominated as the fifth woman, I hope that what it does is that women of all ages look at it and they also find the spark within themselves that says: 'Now I have to go make my movie.' That's what I want. And I want it selfishly because I want to see their stories."

Morrison posted Twitter of her nomination: "I hope it tells all the dreamers out there (especially the young girls with cameras in their hands) that ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE."

In what's been a wide-open awards season, Oscar voters chose nine best-picture nomi-



This image released by Fox Searchlight Pictures shows Sally Hawkins, left, and Octavia Spencer in a scene from the film "The Shape of Water." AP

nees, including four with female protagonists: "The Shape of Water," "Lady Bird," Martin McDonagh's rage-fueled comic drama "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," Jordan Peele's horror sensation "Get Out," Joe Wright's Winston Churchill drama "Darkest Hour," Steven Spielberg's timely newspaper drama "The Post," Christopher Nolan's World War II epic "Dunkirk," Luca Guadagnino's tender love story "Call Me By Your Name" and Paul Thomas Anderson's twisted romance "Phantom Thread."

One of Gerwig's first calls of congratulations was to another first-time filmmaker, Peele. The two have been brought together by Hollywood's months-long Oscar campaigning and their mutual rookie status. (Gerwig previously co-directed a small feature.)

Peele becomes the fifth black filmmaker nominated for best director, and the third to helm a best-picture nominee, following Barry Jenkins last year for "Moonlight." He's also the third person to receive best picture, director and writing nods for his first feature film after Warren Beatty ("Heaven Can Wait") and James L. Brooks ("Terms of Endearment").

"I'm going to write. I'm now going to get hard at work on the next one," Peele said by phone. "One of the greatest things that I get from this whole process is this faith in my voice. It's like jet fuel. It makes me

want to make as many movies that I can in my life.

"The Shape of Water" landed just shy of tying the record of 14 nominations, scoring a wide array for nominations for its cast (Sally Hawkins, Richard Jenkins, Octavia Spencer), del Toro's directing, its sumptuous score (by Alexandre Desplat) and its technical craft. Del Toro said in an interview Tuesday that he would celebrate with an extra chicken sausage for breakfast: "That will be my

indulgence for the day."

"You realize that we are all, in some way or another, a bit of an outsider in different ways," said del Toro of his film's resonance. "Not fearing the other but embracing the other is the only way to go as a race. The urgency of that message of hope and emotion is what sustained the faith for roughly half a decade that the movie needed to be made."

All of the acting front-runners—Frances McDormand ("Three Billboards"), Gary

Oldman ("Darkest Hour"), Allison Janney ("I, Tonya"), Sam Rockwell ("Three Billboards")—landed their expected nominations. But there were plenty of surprises and more than a few landmarks in the nominations announced from Los Angeles ahead of the March 4 ceremony, to be hosted by Jimmy Kimmel.

Meryl Streep scored her 21st nomination, for "The Post," and John Williams ("Star Wars: The Last Jedi") his 51st. Two 89-year-old leg-

Oscars make history, quietly, with transgender nominees

NEW YORK (AP)—Oscar nods for women and minorities drew many of the headlines in Tuesday's nominations, but this year's Academy Awards also mark a breakthrough for transgender filmmakers.

Yance Ford, the director of the documentary "Strong Island" and a trans man, became the first transgender filmmaker nominated for an Oscar. His film, a Netflix release about Ford's investigation into his brother's 1992 murder, was nominated for best documentary.

Sebastian Lelio's "A Fantastic Woman," Chile's Oscar entry, was also nominated for best foreign language film. It stars Daniela Vega, a trans actress, as a transgender singer mistreated in the aftermath of her boyfriend's death.

Alluding to those nominations, as well as those for

films featuring prominent gay characters such as "The Shape of Water," "Call Me By Your Name" and "Lady Bird," GLAAD applauded the Oscar field.

"It's a big day for LGBTQ-inclusive films at the Academy Awards. Films like 'The Shape of Water,' 'A Fantastic Woman,' 'Lady Bird,' and 'Call Me By Your Name' not only have complex, detailed, and moving portrayals, but prove that audiences and critics alike are hungry for stories which embrace diversity," said Sarah Kate Ellis, GLAAD president and CEO.

"These important stories move the needle forward on LGBTQ acceptance at a time when media images are often the front lines for marginalized communities."

Some had hoped Vega would become the first transgender actor nomi-

nated. Hollywood has come under increasing criticism for celebrating trans stories played by non-trans stars, while failing to cast transgender actors.

Hilary Swank ("Boys Don't Cry"), Jared Leto ("Dallas Buyers Club"), Eddie Redmayne ("The Danish Girl") and Felicity Huffman ("Transamerica") have all garnered Oscar nominations for trans roles, with Swank and Leto winning. But the transgender stars of Sean Baker's 2015 film "Tangerine" escaped Oscar notice, too, though the film's Mya Taylor won an Independent Spirit Award.

Lelio said Tuesday he sees "A Fantastic Woman" as a love story "that happens to happen to a transgender woman."

"For me, it has always been a film about the limits to our empathy," Lelio said. "About what we are willing to allow

ends became the oldest nominees: Agnes Varda ("Faces Places," best documentary) and James Ivory ("Call Me By Your Name," for adapted screenplay). There were eight first-time acting nominees, including 22-year-old "Call Me By Your Name" breakthrough Timothee Chalamet and Daniel Kaluuya, 28, of "Get Out." Saoirse Ronan, that grizzled 23-year-old, landed her third Oscar nom, for "Lady Bird."

Denzel Washington ("Roman J. Israel, Esq.") was nominated for best actor, likely eclipsing James Franco ("Disaster Artist"). Franco was accused of sexual misconduct, which he denied, just days before Oscar voting closed.

Christopher Plummer, who replaced Kevin Spacey in Ridley Scott's "All the Money in the World," also sneaked into the best supporting actor category. Added to the film in reshoots little more than a month before the film's release, 88-year-old Plummer is the oldest acting nominee ever. "Everything has happened so quickly of late that I am still a trifled stunned but excited by it all," said Plummer.

Perhaps most unexpected was the broad success of Paul Thomas Anderson's "Phantom Thread," which scored not only nods for Daniel Day-Lewis for best actor and Lesley Manville, for best supporting actress, but also nominations for best picture, Anderson's direction, costume design and Johnny Greenwood's score.

from others, where we draw the line in terms of which people are legitimate or which acts of love are legitimate or not."

Transgender people have been nominated in other Oscar categories. The composer Angela Morley received two nods, for 1974's "The Little Prince" and 1976's "The Slipper and the Rose."

Most recently, singer Anohni, formerly known as Antony of Antony and the Johnsons, became the first transgender performer ever nominated. She collaborated with J. Ralph on the nominated song "Manta Ray" for the documentary "Racing Extinction."

But when the category's other nominees—Lady Gaga, Sam Smith, the Weeknd—were given performing slots during the 2016 broadcast, Anohni was not, and she opted to boycott the ceremony.

Kobe Bryant may win yet another trophy—an Oscar

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Does Kobe Bryant need another trophy? He might get one—at the Oscars.

Bryant, the retired Los Angeles Lakers star, was nominated in the animated short category for “Dear Basketball,” based on a poem he wrote in 2015 announcing his impending retirement from basketball. He was nominated along with veteran Disney animator Glen Keane.

“What???” Bryant responded on Twitter. “This is beyond the realm of imagination. It means so much that the @TheAcademy deemed #DearBasketball worthy of contention.”

The reaction to Bryant’s nomination was not all positive, however. Some on social media recalled the athlete’s sex assault case from more than a decade ago. “Congrats Academy you just nominated an accused rapist—Kobe Bryant for best animated short,” wrote Melissa Silverstein, of Women and Hollywood, on Twitter.

Bryant was accused in June 2003 of sexual assault by a



worker at hotel in the Vail, Colorado area. Sexual assault charges were filed but dropped

the following year after the woman told prosecutors she was unwilling to testify. Bryant

in 2005 entered an out-of-court settlement with the woman for undisclosed terms.

The academy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In this Dec. 18, 2017 file photo, former Los Angeles Laker Kobe Bryant arrives for a halftime ceremony, retiring both of his jersey’s during an NBA basketball game between the Los Angeles Lakers and the Golden State Warriors, in Los Angeles. AP

Bryant’s poem begins: “Dear Basketball, from the moment I started rolling my dad’s tube socks, and shooting imaginary game-winning shots in the Great Western Forum, I knew one thing was real: I fell in love with you.”

It reflects on how time is running out. “I can’t love you obsessively for much longer,” it says. “This season is all I have left to give. My heart can take the pounding, my mind can handle the grind. But my body knows it’s time to say goodbye.”

It ends by counting down the final five seconds on a game clock.

Bryant, 39, a five-time NBA champion, played 20 seasons with the Lakers before retiring last year.

PORTRLAND, Ore. (AP)—Ursula K. Le Guin, the award-winning science fiction and fantasy writer who explored feminist themes and was best known for her Earthsea books, has died at 88.

Le Guin died suddenly and peacefully Monday at her home in Portland, Oregon, after several weeks of health concerns, her son, Theo Downes-Le Guin said Tuesday.

“She left an extraordinary legacy as an artist and as an advocate of peace and critical thinking and fairness, and she was a great mother and wife as

Ursula K. Le Guin, best-selling science fiction author, dies

well,” he said.

“Godspeed into the galaxy,” Stephen King tweeted, saying Le Guin was a literary icon, not just a science fiction writer.

Le Guin won an honorary National Book Award in 2014 and warned in her acceptance speech against letting profit define what is considered good literature.

Despite being a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1997—a rare achievement for a science fiction-fantasy writer—she often criticized the “commercial machinery of bestsellerdom

and prizedom.”

“I really don’t want to watch American literature get sold down the river,” Le Guin said in the speech. “We who live by writing and publishing want—and should demand—our fair share of the proceeds. But the name of our beautiful reward is not profit. Its name is freedom.”

Le Guin’s first novel was “Roncannon’s World” in 1966 but she gained fame three years later with “The Left Hand of Darkness,” which won the Hugo and Nebula

awards—top science fiction prizes—and conjures a radical change in gender roles well before the rise of the transgender community.

The book imagines a future society in which people are equally male and female and also dramatizes the perils of tyranny, violence and conformity.

Her best-known works, the Earthsea books, have sold in the millions worldwide and have been translated into 16 languages. She also produced volumes of short stories, po-

etry, essays and literature for young adults.

Le Guin’s work also won the Newbery Medal, the top honor for American children’s literature. Last year, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

“I know that I am always called ‘the sci-fi writer.’ Everybody wants to stick me into that one box, while I really live in several boxes,” she told reviewer Mark Wilson of SciFi.com.

Neil Gaiman, a fellow

Newbery, Hugo and Nebula recipient, mourned her death on Twitter and called Le Guin “the deepest and smartest of the writers.”

“Her words are always with us. Some of them are written on my soul,” he wrote.

A longtime feminist, Le Guin earned degrees from Radcliffe and Columbia. Her 1983 “Left-Handed Commencement Address” at Mills College was ranked one of the top 100 speeches of the 20th century in a 1999 survey by researchers at the University of Wisconsin and Texas A&M University.

Celibacy before marriage puts extra urgency on setting a date

DEAR ABBY: I’m a 50-year-old male engaged to be married to my elementary school sweetheart, “Marie.” This will be the second marriage for both of us. We’ve been dating for six years, three of which were a long-distance relationship.

During a time when her mother became ill and sadly passed, Marie told me God had spoken to her and told her not to be sexually active anymore until we’re married. I respect and want to honor her and God, but my concern is that we haven’t even discussed a wedding date. The earliest could still be six or eight months away. Am I wrong for feeling resentment toward Marie, and will this resentment create problems after marriage with our bedroom life?

ON HOLD IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR ON HOLD: You and Marie have known each other for many years, and know each other very well in every sense. Because Marie doesn’t want to have intimate relations again until after you are married, you should not only discuss a wedding date, but also an elopement.

DEAR ABBY: My sister takes my nephews for modeling and acting assignments. They have been in print ads, websites for clothing, and even a movie.

I was shocked when she told me her 6-year-old is interviewed without a parent present in the room. The boy is bright,

self-possessed and spirited, but still—he’s only 6. Given the recent revelations about industry-wide problems with child sexual abuse (“An Open Secret” documentary), was I out of line to suggest she have a device to listen in and record?

CONCERNED AUNTIE

DEAR CONCERNED AUNTIE: Better than that, minor children should have a trusted and responsible adult present—whether it’s a parent, another relative or the child’s agent. That way, EVERYONE would be protected.

DEAR ABBY: My 24-year-old son, “Jeremy,” no longer speaks to me because I asked him to move out. I’m not a fan of his girlfriend, and I’m worried about drugs. Jeremy and I have always been super close. I am so sad and I want to do what’s right for both of us. What should I do?

TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING

DEAR TRYING: I don’t know how emotionally mature Jeremy is, but chronologically he’s an adult. If you suspected that he was using drugs while living with you, you had the right to insist he be tested for them — the tests are easily obtainable—as a condition of his continuing to live with you. However, for you to have based living under your roof on the condition that you “liked” his girlfriend was heavy-handed. It was wrong, and for that you should apologize.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

If you do, perhaps it will give you a chance to mend fences.

DEAR ABBY: We have a relative who is a terrible cook. How can we refuse her invitations when she’s only trying to reciprocate? We enjoy her company, but not her food. We have gone out to eat, but she wants to cook for us! What to do?

SORRY, NOT HUNGRY

DEAR SORRY: You have two choices. Either be honest with her or graciously eat her food as infrequently as possible (and when you do, bring along a dish of your own to add to her dinner).

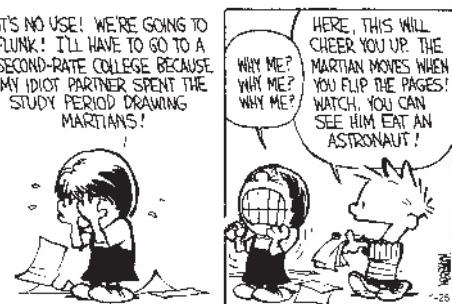
For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson



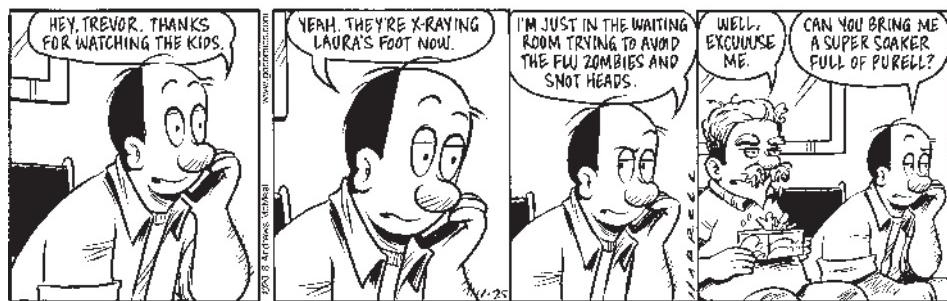
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| ACROSS | | 38 | Provide food for | 56 | Late July babies | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|----|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | River blockers | 40 | Circle ratio | 1 Loony | 2 "Sad to say..." | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk |
| 5 | Ear warmer | 41 | Valerie Harper sitcom | 2 "Sad to say..." | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | |
| 9 | Crunchy sandwich | 42 | Roof beam | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 12 | Jai — | 43 | Be sick | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 13 | Gumbo veggie | 44 | Perma-nently dyed, as fabric | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 14 | Kanga's kid | 45 | Altar affirm-ative | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 15 | Basket-ball ploy | 46 | Perma-nently dyed, as fabric | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 17 | Mess up | 47 | Be sick | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 18 | Rock concert souvenir | 48 | Perma-nently dyed, as fabric | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 19 | Dodge | 49 | Eye part | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 21 | Rejection | 50 | Differ-ently | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 22 | Jeter of baseball | 51 | German article | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 24 | Corp. leaders | 52 | Carton sealer | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30 | Thumbs-up | 35 | Wee bit | 37 | French tower designer | 39 | Un-spoken | 40 | Standard | 41 | Incursion | 42 | Conceal | 43 | Valentine flower | 44 | Yarn | 45 | Canadian gas brand | 46 | Numbered rds. | 49 | Mouths (Lat.) | 50 | Back talk | | |
| 27 | Scepter | 53 | Eye part | 3 Prepare potatoes | 4 Peaceful protests | 5 Humorist | 6 Guitar's kin | 7 Monk's title | 8 Charlatan | 9 End, as an engage-ment | 10 Parlia-mentarian | 11 Ripped | 16 | Buddy babies | 20 | Dog doc | 22 | Blood giver | 23 | Tend texts | 24 | Camp bed | 25 | Perfume label word | 26 | Risque Sahl | 27 | Hayseed | 29 | Profit | 30</ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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LeBron gets 30K, but Spurs beat slumping Cavs



SAN ANTONIO (AP)—LeBron James became the youngest player ever with 30,000 career points, then got upstaged by the youngest player on the court.

Spurs point guard Dejounte Murray—a friend and mentee of James—had 19 points, 10 rebounds and seven steals to lift San Antonio over the slumping Cleveland Cavaliers 114-102 on Tuesday night.

"He's fearless, he's not impressed," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said of the 21-year-old. "He really sets the pace for us. He's a fine defender. He's learning how to play the game and doing a fine job."

Murray, making his second start since replacing a healthy Tony Parker, needed that fortitude while battling James in the fourth quarter. He soared for a tip follow, then rose to disrupt James' driving layup, which led to a 3-pointer by Danny Green that gave the Spurs a 105-94 lead with 4:20 remaining.

"(Murray) was great," said LaMarcus Aldridge, who had 30 points for San Antonio after being selected as an All-Star reserve earlier in the day.

"He's very athletic and he brings something at that position that we haven't had in a while. I was proud of him down the stretch. I thought he kind of grew up tonight."

James had 28 points while becoming the seventh member of the 30,000-point club, yet he couldn't keep the Cavaliers from dropping their 10th in 13 games.

"I don't ever fully appreciate what I do anytime I accomplish something, no matter if it's a win or a loss," James said. "I'm looking forward to the moment when I can be done with the game and I can sit back with my family and my friends and we can drink some wine and talk about all the accomplishments that I had and feats I was able to accomplish."

Murray's effort helped San Antonio push past Cleveland in a battle between teams entangled in turmoil.

The Spurs denied reports that injured superstar Kawhi Leonard is unhappy with how the team is handling his right quadriceps tendinopathy and wants to be traded.

The Cavaliers, meanwhile, acknowledged reports that they held a team meeting to address Kevin Love's early exit due to illness from a blowout loss at Oklahoma City and his subsequent absence from the following day's practice. The airing of grievances eventually focused on the team's poor play, which included a 148-124 loss to the Thunder



San Antonio Spurs center Joffrey Lauvergne (77) battles Cleveland Cavaliers center Tristan Thompson (13), guard Derrick Rose (1) and guard Kyle Korver (26) for a rebound during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018, in San Antonio. San Antonio won, 114-102.

19 points while Dinwiddie and DeMarre Carroll had 13 each.

Kings 105, Magic 99

In Orlando, Garrett Temple scored 19 of his career-high 34 points in the fourth quarter to lift Sacramento over Orlando.

Willie Cauley-Stein had 21 points and nine rebounds and Buddy Hield added 13 points for the Kings, who stopped an eight-game losing streak. Temple accounted for all of Sacramento's points during a 17-6 run that put the Kings ahead, 103-97, with 23.5 seconds to go.

Evan Fournier led the Magic with 22 points and Elfrid Payton had 21 points, seven assists and seven rebounds.

Lakers 108, Celtics 107

In Los Angeles, Kyle Kuzma scored 17 of his 28 points in a phenomenal fourth quarter, and the surging Los Angeles Lakers sent the Boston Celtics to their fourth consecutive loss.

Jordan Clarkson scored 22 points in the sixth consecutive home win by the Lakers, who have won three straight and seven of nine overall during their best stretch of the season. Los Angeles nearly gave it away by missing four free throws in the final 20 seconds, but Marcus Smart missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer for the Eastern Conference-leading Celtics.

Kyrie Irving scored 33 points for the Celtics, who opened a four-game road trip by extending their longest losing streak in nearly two years.

Warriors 123, Knicks 112

In Oakland, Kevin Durant mouthed off to official James Williams, got tossed late and might have cost himself another assist during a career night of dishing out the ball.

"I told him he was wrong," Durant said afterward of arguing with Williams in the first half over a carry.

Stephen Curry scored 17 of his 32 points in the third quarter to go with seven assists and six rebounds, and the Golden State Warriors used a big second half to beat the New York Knicks.

Durant added 14 points, a career-high 14 assists and two blocks before his ejection with 2:50 left for a second technical.

on Saturday.

"If you're going to speak out and talk, you've got to back it up and we didn't do that tonight," Cleveland coach Tyronn Lue said. "We talked about that this morning."

Love said the Cavs have a history of thriving on chaos, and they seemed to put the dysfunction aside early as James got the seven points he needed to reach his milestone.

After missing his first two midrange jumpers and a pair of free throws, James made two driving layups and a

20-footer, and then rose above Green for a 19-foot jumper with one second remaining in the first quarter to reach the mark. The shot put Cleveland up 29-25.

At 33 years and 24 days, James is the youngest player to get 30,000. Bryant was 34 years and 104 days when he got there.

"It's just a special moment," James said. "It's something I never set out to do. I'm not even a score-first guy when it comes to playing basketball. I love getting my teammates involved

and seeing my teammates be excited about scoring and me getting assists. For me to sit here and be the youngest player ever to reach 30,000 ... I put a lot of work into my game and it's been a byproduct of that."

Thunder 109, Nets 108

In Oklahoma City, Russell Westbrook made a go-ahead layup with 3.3 seconds left to help Oklahoma City rally from a 15-point second-half deficit and beat Brooklyn.

The lead changed hands six

times in the final 2:23. Brooklyn went ahead 108-107 on a driving layup by Spencer Dinwiddie with 7.8 seconds left, but Westbrook answered with his own. After three timeouts, Dinwiddie missed a 3-point attempt at the buzzer, with the Thunder's Andre Roberson guarding him closely.

Westbrook had 32 points and Paul George had 28 with nine rebounds. George was left off the NBA All-Star roster earlier in the day.

Joe Harris led the Nets with

Eagles have bought into team-first approach



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Winning is an easy sell.

The Philadelphia Eagles are the first team since the 1990 New York Giants to reach a Super Bowl without a player totaling 1,000 scrimmage yards though running backs Jay Ajayi and LeGarrette Blount and wide receivers Alshon Jeffery and Torrey Smith have done so in the past.

That group plus Pro Bowl tight end Zach Ertz, wide receiver Nelson Agholor and others have bought into a team-first, unselfish concept. They're not checking their stats after games. The only number they cared about all season was the win column.

One more against New England in the Super Bowl brings home the team's first NFL title since 1960.

"I think this group of guys is as good as you could ask to be around," offensive coordinator Frank Reich said. "Really, the character and the work ethic, the camaraderie, just the commitment to the process that Coach (Doug Pederson) and our staff is always talking about. There's a complete buy-in."

"It really helps that we've had the success and the execution. It's always easier to buy in when you're having the success that we've had."

Blount didn't even get a carry in a loss at Kansas City in Week 2. Then he ran for a season-high 136 yards two weeks later at the Chargers. It was the only 100-yard rushing performance by Philadelphia this season.

Blount, who led the NFL with 18 rushing touchdowns with New England last year, led the Eagles with 766 yards

rushing but his touches decreased after Ajayi was acquired from Miami.

"You can't be selfish when everybody has one common goal," Blount said. "You have to make sacrifices for the betterment of the team. We've done that and it's gotten us this far."

Ajayi came to Philadelphia with a reputation for selfishness, but it hasn't been an issue. He kneeled on the turf and sobbed after the Eagles beat Minnesota in the NFC championship game.

"It's a special feeling to not be done and to still have our goal of winning a Super Bowl right there in front of us," he said.

Jeffery was the go-to man in Chicago before joining the Eagles. He didn't have one 100-yard game, but led the team with nine TD catches.

"We're not looking at numbers, just going out there and

playing," Jeffery said. "No matter who's out there having a great game, or whoever the ball's going to, as long as we're doing our job and just catching and working and getting those wins, that's all that matters."

There were no "throw me the damn ball" moments in Philadelphia's locker room.

"I didn't have to sell it too much," Pederson said. "These guys are unselfish players. They are team players. I think any time that you factor in the wins, and they're contributing to the wins, it sort of minimizes or sort of takes away the (idea) that,

'I've got to have 1,000 yards; I got to have 10 touchdowns; I've got to rush for this many yards and have this many touchdowns.' I think it minimizes that a little bit, because the team is doing well and the success of the offense."

Chung continues amazing run, may face Federer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Hyeon Chung has reached the semifinals of a Grand Slam for the first time, following up his upset victory over six-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic in the fourth round with a 6-4, 7-6 (5), 6-3 win Wednesday over Tennys Sandgren.

The No. 58-ranked Chung is the first Korean player to reach the last four of a major, and the lowest-ranked man to reach the Australian Open semifinals since Marat Safin in 2004.

After taking out No. 4 Alexander Zverev and 12-time major winner Djokovic in back-to-back rounds, Chung could next face defending champion Roger Federer for a spot in the final. Federer was playing Tomas Berdych later Wednesday in the quarterfinals.

After missing a match point on Sandgren's serve and earning three more at 40-0 while serving for the match, the 21-year-old Chung got a bit tight. He missed four match points in the final game in all and had to fend off two break points as the pressure increased.

"In last game, I'm thinking to start what I had to do in ceremony or something like that," he said, explaining how he got slightly ahead of



himself. "After deuce, break point. Nothing to do with ceremony. Just keep focused."

Until the last game, Chung had been simply too consistent for No. 97-ranked Sandgren, the 26-year-old American who had never won a match at a Grand Slam tournament or beaten a top 10 player until last week.

Sandgren's unexpected run—he beat 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka and No. 5 Dominic Thiem en route to the quarterfinals—was overshadowed by heavy scrutiny of his social media accounts and his follows and retweets of far-right activists. He deleted his Twitter history before the quarterfinals, but must have been distracted by the fallout.

There were no distractions for 2016 champion Angelique Kerber, who routed U.S. Open finalist Madison Keys 6-1, 6-2 to reach the semifinals.

Kerber had a breakout year in 2016, winning the Australian and U.S. Open titles and reaching the No. 1 ranking, but slipped into the 20s last year. She didn't win a title between the 2016 U.S. Open and the Sydney International earlier this month.

Her third-round victory over Maria Sharapova made her the only singles Grand Slam winner remaining in the women's draw. But a struggling fourth-



South Korea's Hyeon Chung returns to United States' Tennys Sandgren during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2018. AP

Injured Nadal forced to retire

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—One point after his medical timeout in the fourth set, Rafael Nadal went to the rear of the court to squat and do a knee-raise, trying to stretch out his injured right leg.

Three games later—one point after his subsequent visit from the trainer—Nadal had to delay Marin Cilic's serve while trying to walk out the pain at the start of the fifth set.

After limping and wincing through two more games, and after failing to fend off a sixth break point, the 16-time major champion was out of the Australian Open.

The sixth-seeded Cilic advanced to his first semifinal in Australia since 2010 with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 2-0 victory Tuesday. He will next play 49th-ranked Kyle Edmund, who beat third-ranked Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to reach a Grand Slam semifinal for the first time.

"Tough moments—not (for) the first time here," Nadal said. "I'm a positive person, but today is an opportunity lost to be in a semifinal for a Grand Slam and fight for an important title for me."

"It's really tough to accept."

Injuries to star players dominated headlines before the tournament. Five-time Australian Open finalist Andy Murray withdrew so he could have surgery on his hip. Nadal (right knee), six-time champion Novak Djokovic (right elbow) and 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka (left knee) left their fitness decisions to the eve of the tournament—it's no surprise they are all out of the tournament.

There are limits to human endurance, and Nadal found his on Tuesday.

"Somebody who is running the tour should think (a) little bit about what's going on. Too many people getting injured," said Nadal, who was still limping and grimacing at a post-match news conference. "I don't know if they have to think a little bit about the health of the players."

"I don't know if we keep playing in this very, very hard surfaces what's going to happen in the future with our lives."

Nadal said the timing and the number of tournaments on the schedule and the proliferation of hardcourts are concerns. Other players have expressed similar views.

round win over No. 88 Hsieh Su-wei had commentators wondering if Kerber was in 2016, or 2017 form.

Against No. 17-seeded Keys, she responded by winning the first four games to take control of the quarterfinal—her first at a major since the 2016 U.S. Open. Keys held in the

fifth game of the first set, but Kerber went on another roll to lead 3-0 in the second set.

Keys slowed the momentum by holding and then getting her first service break of the match, but Kerber responded quickly to finish it off in 51 minutes. She broke Keys six times in the match and now owns a 7-1 re-

cord against the American.

"I'm just trying to enjoy myself again on court," Kerber said of change of fortunes. "I know that I was working hard in the offseason, and I know that I can play good matches. I know that I can win close matches and also, yeah, going out there and playing good in the bigger tournaments."

"I just try to find the feeling back that I had, like 2016, and just enjoying my time. I mean, on and off court."

For Keys, it was another disappointing loss in a major. She lost the U.S. Open final to Sloane Stephens last September but said she was learning with every experience in the majors.

North America touts 'risk averse' World Cup bid

LONDON (AP)—With barely four months until FIFA votes on the 2026 World Cup host, Morocco got around to launching its bid on Tuesday.

There's now a campaign logo and social presence but still few details of how the North African nation will stage the first World Cup after the leap from 32 to 48 teams.

Far more active is the rival joint bid from the United States, Canada and Mexico, which was staging a simultaneous event in London on the latest leg of a nine-month-old campaign.

During the near-silence from Moroccan soccer officials, their North American counterparts have been dogged throughout by questions about the impact of inflammatory remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump on

FIFA voters in June.

While wanting to promote a North American World Cup offering financial "certainty" and being "risk averse," the bid leadership on Tuesday was pressed on recent comments denigrating African nations during a White House meeting on immigration.

"We can't control the politics," U.S. Soccer Federation President Sunil Gulati said alongside Canadian and Mexican colleagues overlooking the River Thames. "It will change over time. And we have got all the assurances we need from all three governments to support the bid in all areas that are important to FIFA."

Gulati said 70,000 pages of contracts are currently being signed.

As well as requiring tax ex-

emptions on FIFA activities in the host nations, the governing body will also demand by March assurances of visa-free access to the tournament. That could run into conflict with

Trump's hard-line immigration stance, including a ban on travel to the U.S. by residents of six majority-Muslim countries, which is being challenged in the courts.

"We have had complete support from the White House on our bid and the government guarantees we need," Gulati said. "Any participants in the World Cup will have access to the country."

As for visiting fans, Gulati stressed that "subject to security checks they will be allowed to participate."

The U.S. is partnering with Mexico on soccer just as



Trump also presses ahead with construction of a border wall between the neighbors.

"In terms of the famous wall, I think football is stronger than that," Mexican soccer federation president Decio De Maria said. "We are working together to have this event. It's not the wall that's going to be part of this bid. It's football."

The United States, which hosted the World Cup in 1994 and failed with another solo bid for 2022, is the majority partner in the 2026 proposal. It is being lined up to stage 60 games, including everything from the quarterfinals onward, while Canada and Mexico would have 10 fixtures each.

"Might it change? Sure, it is possible," Gulati said when asked if the junior partners might gain more matches.

TanHoldings FC, 4 others confirm entry to M-League

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

 Fresh from its title conquest in the fall season of the M-League, TanHoldings Football Club is returning for the spring season of Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's premier tournament for adult teams.

TanHoldings FC, which defeated the Teen Ayuyus in last month's championship game, is one of the five squads that have confirmed their participation to the M-League this season ahead of the Jan. 31 deadline. Paire Football Club and Winners/Pacific Eco are also entered in Division A, while Sun Palace will be playing in Division B. TanHoldings FC will also field a team in Division B.

M-League is tentatively set to open its 2018 season on Feb. 18 and interested teams are requested to send two representatives at the coaches/managers meeting on Feb. 1 at 6pm at the TSL Plaza in Garapan. Participating squads must also turn in their roster on Feb. 9.

Meanwhile, TanHoldings



TanHoldings officials, players, and volunteers pose for a group photo after a clean-up drive at the Francisco M. Sablan Middle School last weekend.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FC held a clean-up drive last Saturday at its home field—the Francisco M. Sablan Middle School. Players and their parents, coaches, and volunteers joined the event that also served as a season-ending gathering for the club.

After the clean-up drive, TanHoldings FC president Eli Arago briefed their mem-

bers about the upcoming 2018 NMIFA Spring Youth League and other competitions that the club will be involved in

this year.

TanHoldings will be fielding teams in the U8, U10, U12 (Division A and B), boys U14,

girls U15, and U17 divisions of the youth league, which will kick off next month. The club topped the U12 (Division

A) of the youth league's spring season last year and finished runner-up to MP United in the boys U17 age group.

er Filtaga members that competed in last weekend's event.

Dan Ganacias (A division), Larry Pascual, Joseph Fernandez (A division), Ronnie Santos, Ely Buenaventura, and Lito Mendoza (A division) were the other monthly Ace winners for April, June, July, August, September, and December, respectively, but did not play in the season-ending competition. (*Jon Perez*)

Twin wins for golfer Jess Yumul



Jess Yumul had a double celebration over the weekend after winning the Filtaga Golfers Association 2017 Ace of Aces yearend tournament and the group's January monthly Ace for 2018.

Meanwhile, Rogolifoi added that one more team may join the SBL 2018 season, bringing the field to 10.

"There could be a 10th team. I just asked them to submit their roster to see if they are competitive enough. We want to keep the level of competition high, especially for those young players who could no longer play after the Little League dropped the Big League [15 to 18 age] division," said Rogolifoi.

Players 17 years old and above are allowed to suit up for any team in the coming season. The defending champions Aces, last year's finalists Falcons, 2016 winner C.K. Bears, D9ers, Blue Jays, GSM, Titanium, Outlaws, and Mariners are the nine teams that have already confirmed their participation in the league.

His percentage of the vote more than doubled from 2015

an 89 at the Kingfisher Golf Links last Sunday and with a 23 handicap he earned a net score of 66 to beat December monthly champion Rodel Macasinag's 73 (96 gross and 23 handicap).

Five players—Freddie Cataluna (March 2017), Manny Po, Nestor Siruelo, Albert Pajarillaga (October 2017),

and Raffy Piamonte—were tied for third place after their similar scores of 75s.

Hak Chon Bae, John Matsumoto, Edgar Abalos, Tony Cabrera, Mike Cruz, Rene Batallones, William Retardo, Ruben Avandano, Paul Kaitpat, Emil Pedernal, Paul Bea, and Ernie Lopez were the oth-

Martinez rockets up Hall of Fame ballot as DHs gain respect



NEW YORK (AP)—Edgar Martinez is rocketing up the Hall of Fame ballot, boosted 13 years after his final swing by new-age statistical analyses and campaigning.

Pacific Oceania is ranked

No. 61 and remained in Group II after placing fifth among the 12 countries that participated in last year's tournament at the Dushanbe Central Stadium in Tajikistan. Hong Kong ruled the competition after beating Uzbekistan in the finals, 2-1, and was promoted to Group I to join Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, and India.

Lee, during her Fed Cup debut, won three matches. She prevailed in her first match as the CNMI player teamed up with New Caledonia's Mayka Zima in pulling off a 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over Iran's Ghazal Pakbaten and Sadaf Sadeghvaziri. Then in the last day of

to last year, and he is projected to be around the 75 percent needed for election when this year's voting is announced Wednesday. He could become only the second Hall of Famer who was primarily a designated hitter.

"I think it's kind of like relief pitchers: Once the first couple started to get in, people had to

accept the fact that they're part of the game now," said MLB.com's Tracy Ringolsby, who voted for Martinez for the first time this year. "You can't get around them. You can't ignore it. And so, you have to give them consideration."

Martinez received 25.2 percent in 2014, when Frank Thomas became the first play-

er elected after spending the majority of his career as DH, a position instituted in 1973. Martinez rose to 27 percent the following year, 43.4 percent in 2016 and 58.6 percent last year. He is on 77.1 percent of the 231 ballots obtained by Ryan Thibodaux and posted on his Hall of Fame vote-tracker.

some top players in the world and even managed to win a set against her opponent in the qualifier.

"During the 10 days I was in Australia, I practiced and hit with other players. There were players there who have ITF rankings and they challenged me to give my best," Lee said.

World No. 178 Lee was pitted against Italy's Lisa Piccinetti in the Australian Open qualifier and stunned her higher-ranked foe (No. 118 and was ranked as high as No. 99) in the first set, 6-3. The Italian then managed to avoid Lee's upset axe by winning the last two sets, 6-1, 6-0.

"I played better in the qualifier and will continue to work hard and improve my game in Fiji as a prepare for the Fed Cup," Lee said.

TEAM

From Page 28

the lightweight division. They are staying at the Renaissance Charlotte Suites Hotel.

Camacho said that he still gets nervous despite the fact that his match against Dober is going to be his 27th fight as a professional.

"I usually start feeling the nerves on fight day. But, I always just take in all of my past experiences and live each mo-

ment of the day. I'm always humbled for the opportunity to do what I love and show the world the islands where I come from," he added.

Camacho's message to his fans in the Marianas is to enjoy watching the fight.

"May everyone back home get together and enjoy each other's company together this fight weekend. And please, please eat some Chamorro barbecue for me until I get back," he jokingly added.

CAROL

From Page 28

"I am back in Fiji and will train here for the Fed Cup," said Lee in a message sent to *Saipan Tribune* last week after her two tournaments in Australia.

The Fed Cup will run from Feb. 6 to 10 and Pacific Oceania is one of the 16 teams vying for the promotional slot to Group I. Other countries entered in the tournament are Top 4 seeds (based on Nov. 13 rankings) Uzbekistan (No. 33), Philippines (No. 48), Malaysia (55), and Indonesia, which lead Pool A, B, C, and D, respectively. Completing the roster are No. 58 Singapore, No. 66 Sri Lanka, No. 71 New Zealand, No. 80 Iran, No. 83 Pakistan, No. 89 Kyrgyzstan, No. 101 Bahrain and

unranked Lebanon and Oman. Draws for other members of the four pools will be held on Feb. 5.

Pacific Oceania is ranked No. 61 and remained in Group II after placing fifth among the 12 countries that participated in last year's tournament at the Dushanbe Central Stadium in Tajikistan. Hong Kong ruled the competition after beating Uzbekistan in the finals, 2-1, and was promoted to Group I to join Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, and India.

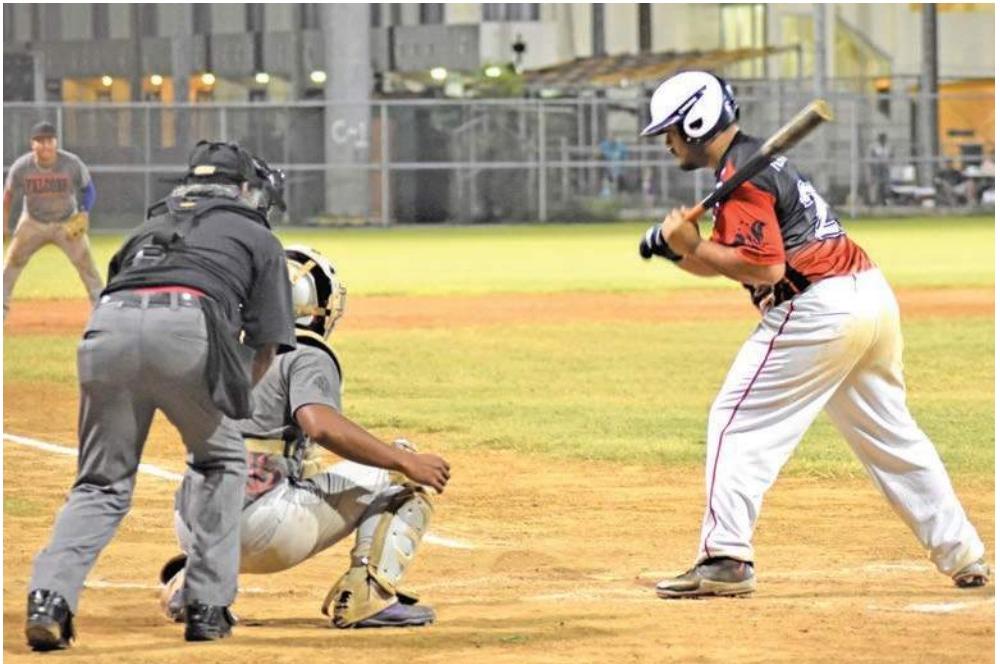
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2017 Saipan Baseball League U25 Division

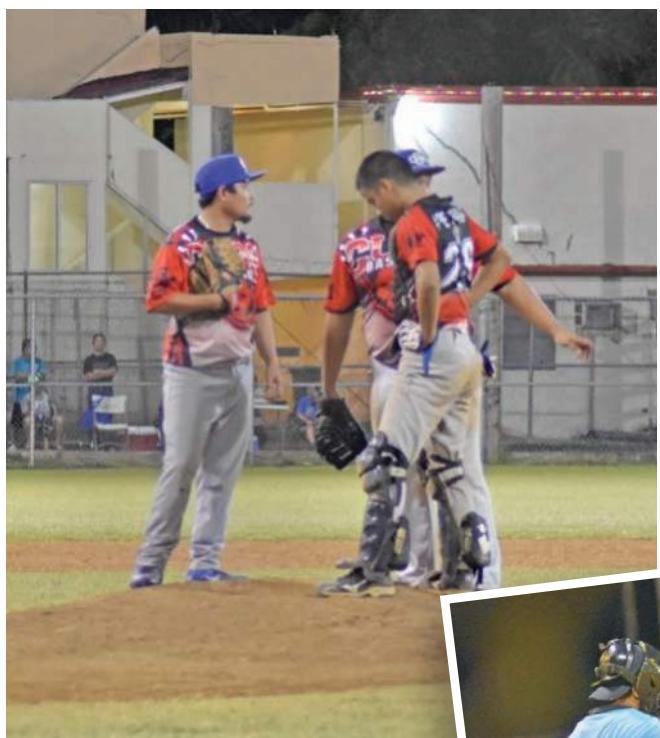
PHOTOS By MACKENZIE PEREZ



The Blue Jays huddle before the start of the ninth inning of their battle for third place game against the IPI Pirates in the Saipan Baseball League's Under 25 division last week at the Francisco M. Palacios Ballfield.



The GSM Cubs' Keoni Kaipat is caught looking for a strike in one of his four plate appearances against Tanapag Falcons pitcher J.J. Lifoifoi during their title game.



GSM Cubs closer Joe Palacios, left, talks to catcher Peyton Lizama, second left, and first baseman Angel Palacios, partially hidden, during a lull in their championship game against the Falcons.



The Blue Jays' Quinson Blas, right, swings for one of his three hits against the Pirates.



Blue Jays catcher Quinson Blas, kneeling, asks for a new ball from chief umpire Highness Asanuma, left.



The Tanapag Falcons' J.J. Lifoifoi prepares to throw a pitch against a GSM Cubs batter.



Two Blue Jays players head to the dugout after the first inning of their game against the IPI Pirates.



The GSM Cubs' Joe Palacios watches one of his throws against the Falcons.



LeBron gets 30K,
but Spurs beat
slumping Cavs

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Chung continues
amazing run, may
face Federer

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE



Team Crank brings island vibe to NC

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Frank "The Crank" Camacho signs a promotional poster for the Ultimate Fighting Championship on FOX 27: Jacare VS Brunson that will be held this weekend at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Frank "The Crank" Camacho—wearing a pair of zoris, board shorts, and shirts provided by some of his sponsors—and the rest of Team Crank have brought in the island spirit to North Carolina.

Camacho along with wife Sarah, TrenchTech promoter Cuki Alvarez, and Brazilian Jiu-jitsu coach Stephen Roberto are now in Charlotte for his Saturday (Sunday, Saipan time) match against Drew Dober in an Ultimate Fighting Championship-sponsored event. The 28-year-old pride of the Marianas will take on the Omaha, Nebraska-born Dober (18-8, 4 by knockout) in UFC ON FOX 27: Jacare VS Brunson in one of the four main card bouts at the Spectrum Center.

This will be Camacho's third time on the UFC cage, but first in the mainland under



the world-renowned promotional outfit. This could bring him closer to his dream of fighting in the big stage in Las Vegas either at the MGM Grand or Mandalay Bay.

Camacho (21-5, 15 KOs) said their mood in the final stretch of the training camp has been great as they all look forward to his match against the Elevation Fight Team member. Other Team Crank members would arrive before the fight.

"We brought the island vibes and Hafa Adai spirit all the way to North Carolina. I can't wait for the fight and do what I love inside the cage," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*. He and other members of Team Crank arrived in Charlotte last Sunday.

He hit the gym for the last stages of his training camp the next day, Monday, and is now in the process of cutting weight to meet the 156-lb limit **See TEAM on Page 26** for fighters in

Carol to play in Fed Cup, again



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

For the second straight year, the CNMI's Carol Lee earned a spot on the Pacific Oceania Team that will compete in the 2018 Fed Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group II in Isa Town, Bahrain next month.

SBL eyes early start for 2018 season

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

SBL The Saipan Baseball League is looking to open its 2018 season earlier than the planned kick-off date to give the soon-to-be-formed CNMI national baseball team enough time to prepare for the 2018 Micronesian Games in Yap.

Feb. 5 is the tentative opening of the SBL 2018 season, but league coordinator Tony Rogolifo said it could be moved to an earlier date.

"That's why we're going to have a final meeting

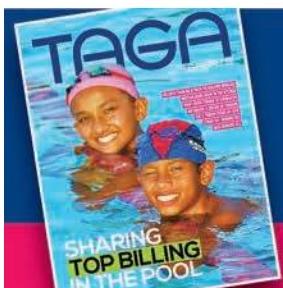
See SBL on Page 26

MACKENZIE PEREZ
Blue Jays catcher Quinson Blas, kneeling, checks the baseball before throwing it to pitcher Virgil Secharmidal, while an IPI Pirates batter waits at the plate during their battle for third place game in the 2017 Saipan Baseball League's Under 25 division last week at the Francisco M. Palacios Ballfield.



Pacific Oceania's lineup for the Fed Cup was announced early this year with Lee teaming up with Papua New Guinea's Abigail Tere-Apisah and Samoa's Steffi Carruthers. Tahiti's Gilles de Gouy will be the team's non-playing captain.

See CAROL on Page 26



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